

RALPH KHAN-
NEWSPAPER RELEASES

Page 8 TRINIDAD GUARDIAN, Monday, October 19, 1988

Innocent travellers paying for evil of drug traffickers

THE EDITOR: As a prelude to this bit of correspondence, I wish to indicate that this letter which was written since June 20, 1988, was really intended for possible publication around that particular period, since your editorial on the following subject was published on June 18.

However, the original contents are as follows: and for the benefit of your vast network of readers, I shall be grateful if you would kindly publish same, due to the most serious drug menace facing the country, especially during these very difficult times.

The drug related incident involving one of our prominent local citizens, local beauty queen Jackie Sanatan-McKenzie, recently sentenced to a 12 year term of imprisonment in a British jail for attempting to smuggle cocaine through London's Heathrow Airport, has impelled me to recall a most humiliating, infuriating and frustrating experience encountered some months ago at the hands of the immigration authorities at the Lester B. Pearson International Airport in Toronto, Canada.

Focus My Attention

Before relating this experience, I wish however, to digress, since I think it most appropriate to focus my attention to the subject contents of that editorial which I fully endorse, and which, in my opinion, helps to amplify the gravity of the particular circumstances I am about to relate.

I quote from the *Guardian's* editorial of June 20, 1988, "Worse still, she has done damage to her country abroad, for having tried to smuggle cocaine from Trinidad.

"She has not only hurt herself, but indirectly all of us. When such incidents happen the Customs officials of the affected countries tend to look on holders of Trinidad and Tobago passports with suspicion.

"They pull us out of line for strip searches. They detain our airplanes and search for illicit drugs.

"Some of this has already been happening in Canada, where several nationals have been caught, or are on suspicion of dealing in cocaine.

"We all know what has been happening with Air Jamaica's planes in North America, and it could well happen to us too."

Since the publication of this editorial may I add, it is common knowledge I believe, that our own national airline BWIA has been subjected to seizure and impounding by the North American authorities and very, very substantial fines imposed in the circumstances have been paid at the expense of our taxpayers

Voice of the people

generally. The foregoing information and sentiments in the editorial quoted above, in very straight-forward, simple and explicit language are so very true.

They are unchallengeable, and the free admissions given here should be heeded at once, by all and sundry, by every citizen of this nation before it's too late. And now for my personal experience.

Precisely on September 14, 1987, several of my immediate relatives and myself boarded the regular afternoon BWIA flight at Piarco International via flight number 604 for Canada in an emergency situation with my eldest sister lying critically ill at a Toronto medical nursing facility.

Lester Pearson Airport

After a very smooth flight, and on arriving at the Lester Pearson Airport at approximately 11 p.m. on that day, we soon realised that several flights from other destinations had landed at approximately the same time, a matter which we hardly took notice of, having faced similar situations at other International Airports on many previous occasions.

So we fell in line with some of the other arriving passengers and headed to Customs as usual, which only took a few moments, and then for the Immigration post.

It is here where our troubles and our frustrations began for myself and another brother of mine, since our other accompanying relatives, mainly females, were very smoothly and expeditiously cleared by the Immigration authorities without a hitch.

As for myself and my brother, when our turn came, although we were in different queues, we were asked individually to step aside and have a seat in a waiting room.

Whilst the clock kept relentlessly ticking away at this late hour, we were growing more anxious to meet our Canadian resident relatives who had come to receive us.

During this time, we were made to sit and wait, with no reasons being given by the Immigration authorities for our detention.

Immigration officers, meanwhile were both continuously and most expeditiously clearing other passengers who were being called in various categories, consisting of Canadian citizens, Canadian residents, immigrants, and persons granted study permits and so on, from among those who were asked to wait in the same room.

These comprised a large number of people. Since no reason was given for our detention, an action which I considered to be arbitrary, both my anger and my frustration began to mount increasingly to the point where I got enough courage and forthrightness to approach the first immigration officer in sight with a view to sorting things out.

In my dialogue with her, I made it crystal clear that the purpose of our visit was to see a critically ill sister resident in Canada.

Despite the fact that her location was in very close to the airport, we were yet very far, since we had already spent double the time taken to drive up to her medical facility, it was a case of emergency on which we had travelled.

Realising that something was wrong, I also indicated to her that both myself and my brother had brought along only one small piece of luggage each and that she could exercise the right to search the both of us as well as our luggage, since we had absolutely nothing to conceal.

Here, I reiterated once more the urgent nature of our visit — to visit my critically ill sister.

She then retorted very tersely, "What are you saying — that I should see you now?"

Being Innocent Citizens

In the circumstances, I humbly replied, "If you are prepared to do this for us, then we shall be most grateful."

As a result of my approach, we were eventually interviewed and immediately went through immigration, but not until a full anxious 30 minutes had elapsed, 30 full minutes of unsolicited tension and suspense.

The crux of the matter is, however, that to see us that we were met by our eagerly awaiting relatives and we made mention of our detention by the immigration authorities, we learnt from them of the most perturbing and disconcerting news that a record number of Trinidadian numbering 25 or so, including females, had been picked up by the Canadian police authorities in one fell swoop just around that same time, everyone without exception, for drug-related offences including possession of possession for the purpose of trafficking, and so on.

The lesson behind this all is that despite being innocent citizens, yet we were made to endure some kind of punitive action for the crimes of our brother and sister in Trinidad, notwithstanding the fact that we were in the course of pursuing our own genuine business.

RALPH D. KHAN, San Fernando.

Trinidad Guardian

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PUBLIC OPINION

Give better day's work

SIR: Within recent years and especially in the decade of the 70's when we pause for a moment to appraise the overall functioning and achievements of the various trade union movements in this country we must all obviously and unanimously agree that the impact made on the nation generally has been tremendous notwithstanding the colossal blunders made by some unions.

Their successful negotiations of new increased wages agreements, their achievement of improved working conditions and health, pension and numerous other fringe benefits for employees to name a few have been so varied that they embrace the oilfields, sugar belts, electricity, telephone, transport and all the other public utilities, contractual and agricultural labour, the public service, dock workers and almost every other sector in the community.

From these assessments therefore we must logically conclude that there exists in the country generally a favourable attitude on both sides i.e. the trade union organisation as a whole

and the large corporations and industries including the public service and smaller business in the private sector.

There is a very important and relevant point which I must say is disturbing. To sum it up all in one word it's the question of productivity and in other words a "fair day's work for a fair day's pay." I would say that the normal work attitude as affects our independent society is a national scourge, our lackadaisical attitude to work.

Our low productivity which is due to several reasons calls for the immediate attention of unionists to educate our workers towards this trend—a better day's work—in order to help halt inflation and prevent a complete collapse of our economy.

It is my personal opinion that the unionist looks at the businessman as a crook so his ambition is to extract from him what he can for a bare minimum of his labour in return. It's his concept that he is rich so he must be bled. There are exceptions though.

RALPH D. KHAN San Fernando

TEAM SPIRIT MADE US WIN

\$5 letter

THE EDITOR. The 1973 'Mina' Test Cricket series in England with England playing at home versus the West Indies is now over and the irreversible results are indelibly established throughout the universe that West Indies were the conquerors and so convincing was this defeat that under no circumstances (including F.M. Wellings sporadic castigations of West Indians which I presume is innate and only helps to accentuate his infamy) can it be considered as a fluke.

The basis of this message is to compare the diversification of feelings and comments being made now after the conclusion of this series with the contrasting tirade of irrational, illogical and unreasonable attacks made so persistently by the majority who made their comments public in the two previous W.I. Series at home.

Now, at the end of this recently concluded English tour, our Contingent of players were showered with luminating addresses, heartiest congratulations, tons of loads of praises, and a dozen or so cables despatched by dignitaries

Then followed the tour of New Zealand. All I wish to say is that with the exception of Kanhai who for some mysterious reason was omitted, we again had all our top pros here and the cream of our locals, and that this series ended in nothing else but a draw.

As if to add insult to injury, the Australian Tour of 1973 came along. Once more we had our top professionals invited and who were present for the series and except for the injured Sobers and Rowe.

Confusion

The results at the end of the series reflected A WIN FOR THE AUSSIES on our home grounds, leaving us with an unenviable record of 0 out of 3 at-home series. Imagine the confusion in our local camps.

When the captain Ian Chappel was asked to comment on the series, he expressed the firm view that a test team on a foreign tour were always inclined to weld itself into one close unit.

RALPH D. KHAN,
San Fernando.

and leaders of some of our brother West Indian Islands.

Every commentator and every critic in the W.I. echoed their fine and favourable comments in favour of our team, team spirit, the good job done by our commendable captain and selectors and all that. Nary an unfavourable comment except one paltry inevitable exercise by one Jamaican source advocating the withdrawal of Jamaica from the W.I. team and the formation of a Jamaican international Test side precisely because of Foster's exclusion in a previous match but mind you at that time there was still another test match yet to come.

Inevitably now here is the contrast. In the recent at-home series versus India, we had our top professionals available for the series and to boot we also had our wealth of on-the-spot locals from whom to choose. In other words we had almost the full percentage of the resources which we now have in our present winning combination if not.

15 ACRES FOR DIVALI NAGAR

The NCIC-National Council for Indian Culture received 15 Acres of land on Wednesday 22nd May 1991. The lands were handed over to the NCIC by the Honourable Prime Minister Mr. A.N.R. Robinson. This achievement has come after a great deal of hard work by

the members of NCIC. President of NCIC Mr. Hans Hanomansingh told the massive audience that the lands will be used for Divali Nagar amongst the many other special projects for Indian Culture, Hinduism and Islam etc.



Picture by D. Sawh.

Editor of AL-HIKMAT being introduced to the Honourable Prime Minister by Senator Haji RALPH KHAN. This picture was taken on May 22nd 1991 when 15 acres of land were handed over to the NCIC by the Prime Minister A.N.R. ROBINSON.

Gandhi a colossus among leaders

By **SENATOR HAJI
RALPH D. KHAN,**
PRO & Chairman, Media
and Publications
Committee, ASJA



HAJI KHAN

THE ANJUMAN Sun-
nat-ul-Jamaat Asso-
ciation not only
abhors, but grossly
and categorically con-
demns the horrendous
and the bizzare assas-
sination of Congressman Rajiv Gandhi, former
Prime Minister of the Republic of India.

The officers and members of ASJA join the rest of the world in condemning such a dastardly, coward and atrocious act, an act of supreme barbarity that befuddles the mind of modern-day man.

The entire ASJA membership take this opportunity to publicly express condolences to the bereaved Gandhi family, to the peoples and the government of India and join the rest of the world in mourning the loss of a colossus among the world of contemporary leaders, yet a rather humble and simple mortal.

The ASJA emphasises that in Islam there is no place whatsoever for violence, and further that it is an ingrained principle of the Muslim to respect lawful authority. Islam neither encourages nor condones the overthrow of any government by force, but rather by the use of constitutional and democratic means. Islam identifies with the principle of God and God alone has the power to endow the gift of life. He and He alone can take life, except in prescribed circumstances where God's laws have been violated.

Time to clean up the calypso act

By HAJI RALPH D KHAN

FOR SEVERAL years now, objective commentators from various walks of life have steadfastly and incontrovertibly clung to the conviction and belief and have steadily continued to claim that the standard of our local calypso compositions have followed the path of rapid decline and degeneration, with particular reference to the lyrical aspect and lyrical content.

In this so-called modern era, and so-called modern-day society in which we live, calypso has oft times been referred to, and rates the classification of belonging to the art form. A performing art which no doubt has earned this country an international image as well as having attained international proportions.

For Trinidad and Tobago nationals generally, especially those of the pre-independence era, the calypso has always had a very special connotation, a special significance. Calypso at the time truly represented and epically portrayed the current day events of society, be they topical or political in flavour, or representing some other specific interest of the day. Basically, calypso was designed with the express purpose in mind, of providing popular public entertainment. Nonetheless, the accent invariably focussed on one of these areas, either of local or international interest.

On this basis therefore, it is reasonable and logical for one to conclude that the calypsonians of that era placed a great deal of emphasis on the quality of their production as well as their physical performances, with special characteristics like morality and moreso, society in mind, and a kind of lyrical composition in keeping with the enforced disciplinary standards of the day scrupulously avoiding crude and offensive language and lewd public performances.

At this juncture, it is interesting to ponder en passant, over the enjoyment of freedom of expression enjoyed by the citizenry of this nation, a virtue and value denied to millions around the globe. Whether democratically or otherwise, that is arguable. But let us pause momentarily and ask ourselves the question. How far must we or should we allow the freedom of expression to go? In the context of calypso, should this freedom be used to vilify one's character, one's religious beliefs and doctrine? Should foul and obscene language, perverse suggestive actions and lewdness be allowed to flourish and go unchecked in the public fora without any checks and balances?

By contrast however, the general theme of calypso over the years has undergone a striking metamorphosis, a kind of metamorphosis which unfortunately seems oriented not only to jolt the society's decent image, but also seems pre-calculated and deliberately designed to transgress all the standard norms of good moral social and spiritual behaviour and decency, one of the gangplanks and a bulwark of any successful

and progressive democracy.

Ironically, one may be inclined to argue however, despite this changing scenario, that the menu dished out within recent times must be indeed good, since almost all the tents/venues are packed to capacity most of the time during the "Carnival season." But this is exactly the point that brings out the very stark and fundamental reality of the situation. In other words, such a scenario if anything at all, only positively serves to endorse and to reinforce the larger question of the lower social standards enveloping our society today.

It points directly to, and indeed serves to amplify the degeneration and the decadence of the very moral fibre of our people, a process which seems to have no end. For today, like over the past few years especially, public outcries from many organisations and individuals alike regarding the attendant profanity of the calypso and the calypsonians, (disregarded anyway) both in terms of composition, lyrics, as well as perverse actions, having gone way beyond the barriers of all normally and generally acceptable standards have become the norm of the day. That is the consensus of a significant but silent majority.

Therefore, it is noteworthy to reflect for a moment on the negative impact which this sort of decadence has imposed upon the young people of this nation, and the not so young. I think, now is an opportune time, this Carnival season that is, for us to take stock and aspire to positively change and to improve our "Carnival image" especially in the calypso arena, since one would shudder to think that if the present trend of obscene songs and lewd behaviour persists, what would be the lot of future generations to come with both economic and moral values and social and spiritual standards on the decline, all at one and the same time.

Suffice it to say, that it is pure unadulterated irony that if the attendant kind of obscenity and lewdness currently engulfing us and which presents itself under the guise of art, cultural and healthy entertainment ceases to exist in the calypso arenas, that the tents would most probably be empty or at least half empty, since that is exactly the kind of material, which due to our continuing degeneration and decaying standards that the audience have grown accustomed to and in which they seem to revel. Without casting any aspersions, it is my view, that even the eminent judges of calypso competitions have fallen downright pray to this malaise and not only condone smut, but unfortunately, also seem to favour and give preference to that type of rendition.

In a nutshell, such a setting can only veritably indeed be classified as a perfect reflection of, and an exemplification of the typical lifestyle of nationals, and of the kind of society in which we co-exist. It's time to clean up our act NOW, since this trend seems to be a precalculated and unending assault on the sacred human anatomy, a God-given endowment.

Alcohol a deadly drug

HAJI RALPH D. KHAN

WITHIN recent times, the question of mandatory drug-testing has elicited tremendous discourse in many circles, both for and against its introduction.

Since however, this blessed land of ours, so richly endowed with an abundance of both natural and mineral resources, yet generally by contrast, chronically handicapped by low productivity despite our natural skills, ability and talent, our intelligentsia, or rather, our highly touted international literacy rating, it is my considered view that mandatory drug-testing should be introduced on a national scale with special emphasis on certain critical areas of essential services which may be regarded as prerequisites for any successful democracy.

The rampant use of illicit drugs and their drug-related activities so commonplace to this society, have together plundered the nation of some of our most precious human resources, gradually reducing and converting them into human derelicts. This despicable scenario has permeated every single stratum of our society leading this once proud nation down the abyss of eternal immoral and intoxicated bliss.

Crimes such as kidnapping, to a lesser extent, murder, rape, and robbery with violence have become the order of the day, most of which smacks either of the use of, or trafficking in the commodity.

Due to the constraint of space I shall in this particular case attempt to provide some scientific statistical data on the negative effects of just one particular drug alcohol, statistics which would startle most of us, if not all.

The drug alcohol, has been scientifically proven by world renowned authorities to be one of the most dangerous and lethal drugs used in this part of the world, and a licensed one at that. How many of us are aware that alcohol, the licensed killer, is the cause of most serious deaths than all the other drugs? In hospitals, one out of every two patients occupies a bed because of alcohol related problems. Accidents at work and at home are more frequently related to the consumption

of alcohol. Alcohol is involved in three out of every four cases of homicide; two out of every three cases of unsuccessful suicide attempts; one in every two cases of rape, including incest; three out of every four cases of robbery with violence; one in every two cases of family brawls and quarrels; also, in many cases of child abuse, divorce, head injuries et cetera.

Alcohol consumed by mothers-to-be can also induce the birth of children with congenital abnormalities, and so the list can go on and on.

According to the *British Medical Journal*, Vol. 302, P. 69 dated March 23, 1991 titled, *Warning: Alcohol Can Damage Your Health*, it is estimated that alcohol was responsible for 2,800 deaths per year in the United Kingdom.

How many of us are aware that in a small Third World country like Trinidad and Tobago with a relatively small population of approximately one million people that in 1986 alone the following amounts of alcohol were produced expressly for local consumption: beer 20.2 million litres, stout (malt beer) 3.4 million litres and rum 10.3 million litres? (Statistics obtained from Pan American Health Organisation Report No. 522 pages 192 to 193 of 1990).

From the foregoing statistics therefore, far from being an illusory concatenation of circumstances, one can quite rationally and logically conclude that if nothing else, at least two principal yet basic areas of concern for a budding nation would be squarely addressed with the introduction of mandatory drug testing in this society viz:

(1) A reversion to the kind of concerted national productivity of which we were once proud but now a conspicuously absent national characteristic, one of which we are more than capable of if we at all aspire to lift our economy out of its' present quagmire, and

(2) The progressive and continuous identification of skilled personnel afflicted by this plague who are in dire need of therapy, and or rehabilitation, the initiative for which must be taken by the state. Such measures could only result in meaningful change towards enhancing our economic status.

Good move on police headquarters

THE EDITOR: It is not very often that one picks up either of the daily newspapers on mornings and finds interesting, pleasant and enlightening news on the front page.

More often than not, one is driven into a state of shock, by reading of some gruesome murder or murders, or is either greeted by the news of persons being savagely beaten and robbed of their personal and household belongings, which, in some instances, comprise their hard earned, life-long savings.

On Thursday, the 23rd November, however, having browsed through the front page of the *Trinidad Guardian*, I was able to breathe a sigh of relief. But it was more like a breath of fresh air, having just come across one of the many infamous dumps now mushrooming throughout the country.

What brought about such a feeling? One may be tempted to ask. Well, having read of the promise of the newly appointed Minister of National Security, to refurbish the once

stately looking Police Headquarters in Port-of-Spain — which incidentally was destroyed by insurrectionists in 1990 — exclusively for renewed police activities, I began to experience the breaking of a new dawn.

There is a kind of extraordinary wisdom being exhibited by a new breed of people, one which we can only hope and pray would certainly continue to filter down to the other government ministries as well, in the immediate future.

This commendable move must be regarded as a most notable and significant breakthrough from the rigid stance adopted by the Manning administration.

For here was Manning, inextricably bent on converting this once majestic building, formerly housing the TT Police Headquarters, and most centrally located at that, into a museum or whatever, to suit his own whims and fancies.

This, despite several stirring appeals by multifarious individuals and

organisations, most notably being, the first and second division police associations, both clamouring to have the building restored once more as the country's police headquarters.

Sad to say, all appeals fell on deaf ears since they were all completely ignored by the government of the day.

The question therefore comes to mind: Can we as citizens really afford the luxury of losing the grandeur of such an exceptionally rare and exquisite kind of structure, with its exclusive architectural design which, for years, has stood as one of the hallmarks of our past colonial era?

Whoever was responsible for its design and construction, we must admit, really possessed the vision and the foresight to create an alluring environment, while bearing in mind its central locality, which afforded the conveniences to administer the affairs of the entire police service of the country.

Needless to say then, the planners involved, who addressed even the ad-

equacy of provisions for the necessary ancillary service, were trail-blazers as well as visionaries of the highest order.

This new fledgling government therefore, especially the new Minister of National Security, deserves the highest commendation and praise for their most logical, reasonable and rational approach to this long simmering problem.

Having positively addressed the situation, I am certain, would undoubtedly benefit the entire citizenry of Trinidad and Tobago.

In conclusion, if we were to accept this move as an example of the kind of positive action this fledgling government is prepared to take, then criticising and condemning them without giving them an opportunity to prove themselves is rather irrational and inconsiderate. Let's stop the bickering and give them a chance then.

Haji RALPH D KHAN,
San Fernando.

How Indians have come a long way

THE EDITOR: Born at Diamond Village in suburban San Fernando, of a first-generation East Indian—my father having been born in 1899—I passed my early years plumb in the middle of a predominantly typical sugar cane plantation environment.

I lived through the era when paved roads were a rarity, and animal-drawn carts formed the mainstay of the transportation and haulage system ally supported by the Trinidad Government Railways.

This was a time when the indentured East Indians were made to endure the cruel punishment and the hardships imposed through the barrack system, barely eking out a livelihood. They also experienced myriad other problems deliberately created by their slave masters including physical and human abuse, a slow dehumanising process calculated to make them abandon both their religion and their culture.

Nevertheless, with their dauntless spirit, their never-ceasing fragility, and their divine will to succeed, these criminally dehumanising burdens so rigorously foisted upon them, eventually proved to be a blessing in disguise.

This proved a catalyst indeed, since these diversities only succeeded in bringing them closer and closer together. But alas! What an admirable metamorphosis! For the more they were oppressed the more resilient they became.

And when I refer to change, I refer to real and dynamic change, drastic and significant change. For example, the rampant illiteracy prevalent among the indentured immigrants for several decades was over-

looked by the colonial rulers.

Through sheer inner strength and unity of purpose, profound religious convictions and commitment, love and respect for one another's culture and practices combined with hard work and a sense of purpose and direction, turned themselves into real achievers. The larger the family, the greater the combined human resources which were well exploited.

Today, these have catapulted many an East Indian family into positions of both intellectual and economic wealth and security.

Also during that era, it was impossible to hear Indian music on the air waves. Not until August 1947, when this innovation was introduced by *Radio Trinidad* with Kamaluddin Mohammed as broadcaster.

Despite this development however, for the next 40 years or so the "radio people" continued to show a kind of open, discriminatory and deliberate contempt towards the East Indian community.

Several years later, *Radio Guardian* followed with a sprinkling of Indian music. Thus, it is instructive to note here that the main objective then, was not really to provide entertainment for the East Indian community, but rather for their economic aggrandisement. That is, to gain substantially from the huge advertising placed by the East Indian commercial sector.

In 1991 the NAR government opened up many new vistas of communication including radio and television stations. The subsequent introduction of *Radio 103 FM*, however, geared expressly to cater for the needs of the East Indian community impacted very heavily on this scenario, not only by filling that need

very successfully, but also by wrenching away a great deal of the stake now being competed for by radio and television.

In days of yore, it was impossible to witness corporate citizens outside the pale of Indian merchants sponsoring or supporting East Indian music or culture, with the exception of BWIA. The airline has for long been the proud and neutral sponsor of an Indian orchestra.

Today, however, some of the commercial banks are lending their support. History would bear me out when I say that, over the years, cane farmers and agriculturists have been consistent and persistent savers.

Another phenomenal change over these 150 years was the transformation of a genre of illiterates into a considerably large cadre of intellectuals. Despite the illiteracy of our ancestors, they never lacked in vision and foresight.

Hordes of offspring migrated over the past one in order to further their education. As a result, many of our past and present professionals journeyed to places like Ireland, Scotland, England, the USA and Canada where some have performed par excellence.

Undoubtedly therefore, the East Indians in this country have really come a long long way indeed.

In conclusion, I can safely say that the Indian community for all its worth is now witnessing a greater form of acceptance by the wider society and they can claim a sense of identity without fear or favour.

HAJI RALPH D. KHAN,
San Fernando

Minister's move on WASA a good one



LETTERS

THE EDITOR: It is rather interesting to note that the same weekend after the very first sitting of the House of Representatives by this new government, and continuing for some time afterwards, the entire media more or less, was bombarded with very scathing criticisms, even outright condemnation in some cases, of the bold decision taken by the Minister of Public Utilities for a moratorium on disconnections.

It is my personal view that the minister having carefully

studied the situation over the years from his own personal experiences with WASA, as well as those of others in the community, but more so, this now being his ministerial mandate, he fully recognises and understands the rather hapless plight of many of our citizens, especially the myriad of our old retired stalwarts, many of whom have contributed a lifetime of labour and sacrifice in order to keep this nation afloat, as well as the extremely poor and unfortunate who really cannot afford to pay, but who today, despite their yeoman contribution, seem to be cast into an interminable state of oblivion by the uncaring "caring" governments of the past decades.

Taking into consideration WASA's abysmal performance over the past decades therefore, the minister's moratorium should be regarded as a blessing and a boon instead for the average citizen, except of course, for the filthy rich bourgeoisie of this country.

The minister in the circumstances, should be highly commended for his fortitude in taking such a decision as so eminently supported by a people's poll thereafter, particularly moreso, at a time like this, when all our citizens alike are looking forward to the Christmas holidays with a spirit of joy, love, happiness, sharing and caring.

Such action could not be more opportune, and I say hats off to the Minister of Public Utilities.

**Haji Ralph D. Khan,
San Fernando**

ASJA Board should be removed

THE EDITOR: I wish to crave your most kind indulgence in publishing the following lines since I regard this matter to be of particularly great interest to me and, to the Muslim community as a whole.

Some time recently, I came across an article penned by one Z Hosein of Claxton Bay entitled "Arima impasse building at ASJA" which I read with great interest. Sad to say, as I read this piece of correspondence, the fears I had entertained for some time regarding the ongoing fiasco at the ASJA Girls' College in San Fernando, were greatly heightened.

Simultaneously though, I experienced a mild degree of personal satisfaction, recognising that someone in the community was bold and brave enough, and had the courage and the fortitude to bring to the attention of both the Muslim community and the nation as a whole, the attitude exhibited by the Chairman and members of the ASJA Education Board.

Needless to say, for several years now, this admirable institution of learning has been standing aloft amongst the best in the country which indicates in no uncertain terms that the Principal, Mrs Fariel Ali, and her staff, have been continuing to do a remarkably wonderful job over the years, a record which is indeed worthy of emulation by like institutions.

It is no secret, that over the past couple of years, the members of the ASJA Education Board are not seeing eye to eye with the current Principal who undoubtedly has acquitted herself most admirably.

In contrast, the present principal who is a deeply religious individual, is completely ensconced in the progress and welfare of the school, its students and parents, as well as being totally committed and devoted to her task of producing generations of outstanding citizens so sadly lacking in our society nowadays.

This disgraceful situation is not only a sad state of affairs, but also

reeks of discrimination, and therefore requires the urgent and immediate attention of both the Ministry of Education and the Teaching Service Commission as well to protect a public servant whose record is nothing but exemplary, but also to prevent anyone from bringing the entire ASJA and its membership into disgrace and disrepute in the eyes of the nation.

In the above context therefore, it is most disturbing to note that the ASJA Girls' College hosted its annual graduation ceremony at the college's auditorium on Tuesday July 2, 2002 and, despite the excellent results produced by the school with its Principal Fariel Ali at the helm, the absence of all the members of the ASJA Education Board was most conspicuous, since neither its Chairman nor any single

member of the Board was in attendance.

Does this situation not reveal a most unpleasant, very high-handed, acrimonious, and undesirable attitude, with a highly discriminatory approach by the Board, and an abuse of power in the wrong hands? This moreso, I am afraid to say when such circumstances require tact and professionalism instead.

I have in the circumstances therefore, quite reluctantly come to the inescapable conclusion like most of the silent and devout ASJA supporters, that by their unfortunate exhibition of deliberately absenting themselves from the 1992 graduation ceremony, the ASJA Education Board has not only made history, but has also unwittingly betrayed its inability to amicably mediate in matters warranting the input of mature individuals.

This entire Board needs to be removed now, without delay, before they continue to inflict more fear and pain in the hearts and minds of both the teachers who are giving yeoman service to the nation, and the students as well, who by any standard, continue to perform with distinction.

Haji Ralph D Khan
Former PRO of the ASJA

WRITE TO:



**Newsday,
Chacon Street,
Port-of-Spain**

Forum

QUESTION: What do you think are positive values demonstrated by members of the Indo-Trinidadian community, towards nation-building.

RALPH KHAN, Former Senator and Islamic Leader.

Trinidad and Tobago is merely another example where the Indo-Trinidadian is today maintaining a level of ambition, personal and family, supported by a work ethic that contributes to the development of his adopted land.



In the face of diversities, the Indo-Trinidadian community with a rural and agricultural background, has harnessed its physical resources by perseverance and persistence to forge a place in the urban, commercial and business world.

Their involvement in the general social and cultural life of the nation belies the misconception of "not wanting to mix."

The attempt to maintain the right and privilege to acknowledge one's cultural heritage, and promote a lifestyle in which the family is paramount, are positive inputs and values in the process to build a multi-cultural nation.

POLITICAL CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE PRESS.

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Lequay deserves praise

THE EDITOR: If ever there was a mortal in our community at this time who really deserves honour and praise for his contribution politically then that man is no less a person than Alloy Lequay leader of the new United Democratic Labour Party.

And praise him let us do now without fear or favour, without partiality or reluctance and without selfishness or restraint.

I must admit that with the evolution of the F.N.M. dawned a new era in our history and independence was the key word. A new image was created, a messiah appeared to black people in this part of the world, a new two-party system of ~~emerged and the ruling party~~ looked both impregnable and impervious.

Today, it's an entirely different story. Our historian-philosopher intellectual P.M. seems to have lost that insatiable zest and enthusiasm for leadership with which he once ruled with hero worship. This I cannot say completely unjustifiable. Continuing from then we have witnessed the timely appearance and disappearance of many household names from the parliamentary rostrum; a change from the two-party system resulting through the emergence of numerous new groups; the exercise of adult franchise seen in the last two elections particularly our last

factionising of others, the lethargic approach and lack of appreciation of the election the flattering results of which have actually produced a one-party state.

Looking realistically at these simple facts I have drawn the logical conclusion that the man Alloy Lequay really deserves praise and I remain convinced that he is the only person on the scene who genuinely appears to be going through the exercise of humility and disgrace in some quarters and rancour and litigation in others and yet emerges through all of this with faith and confidence and true purpose in his cause of trying to foster unity.

RALPH D. KHAN

LETTERS

THE PUNITIVE BAIL SYSTEM

THE EDITOR: Within recent times, the very vexing and oppressive system of obtaining bail in this country by accused persons charged with criminal offences has quite rightly attracted the attention and the focus of the media in general, whilst at the same time, succeeding in raising the consciousness of the population on this issue, *moreso*, since the laying of charges against those involved in the recent *Piarco Airport affair*.

This, and other related events highlighted by the media, have undoubtedly left many to ponder why the bail process has lately become so tedious, onerous and, complicated, thereby causing a number of people to be unwittingly incarcerated despite the constitutional provision that an accused person is presumed to be innocent until proven guilty.

Gleaning from the various press publications on the issue of bail, it is apparent that the powers-that-be, whose prerogative it is to set/grant bail are of significantly diverse views on this matter and, as such, exercise their powers as they personally see fit, which in many

instances, appear in the minds of the public not only to be inconsistent, but rather, to be quite arbitrary in some instances.

In the Magistrates' Courts, where the vast majority of bails are fixed by magistrates, it has become very commonplace to find certain magistrates ordering "Approval Bail" by the relevant Clerk of the Peace, a fairly novel procedure which is fast becoming a most potent and effective prescription for corruption involving persons who cannot pay for these services which are supposed to be provided free of charge thereby resulting in the unacceptable fact that some of them are unwittingly despatched to the Remand Yard at Golden Grove, sometimes, for an indefinite stay.

It is indeed sad to note, that unsuspecting parties/relatives wishing to obtain bail despite being able in many instances to comply with and, to furnish, all the necessary requirements laid down in the Bail Act No 18 of 1994, unfortunately become victims of circumstances, which are

totally out of their control on account of this undesirable practice. Further to the above, in such an untenable situation where the magistrates' courts are clogged with such a heavy backlog of cases with countless numbers of cases scheduled for any given day, this practice of ordering "Approval Bail" should forthwith be discontinued by the authorities except in rather exceptional circumstances, since almost invariably, this practice is proving to be a most effective deterrent to some accused persons obtaining bail on the day his matter is called.

ENCUMBERED DEEDS

In several other instances, the question of using an encumbered deed viz: a deed of conveyance, or, a certificate of title to property which has a lien in lieu of a mortgage transaction or the like for the purpose of granting bail has come up in the courts on a number of occasions within recent times, particularly *moreso*, where a number of Justices of the Peace, (JPs) were indictably

WRITE TO:

**Newsday,
Chacon Street,
Port-of-Spain**

charged with using such deeds for the purpose of granting bail. This indeed raises a very interesting issue, for on the one hand, while the Bail Act No 18 of 1994 unambiguously states that in such cases the approval of the court is necessary, on the other hand, the Summary Offences Act gives Justice of the Peace concurrent jurisdiction with the magistrate. And, what makes this even more puzzling is the fact that all such matters in which Justices of the Peace were charged for illegally using encumbered deeds for the purpose of granting bail, these matters were thrown out by the High Court bringing to mind the very recent instances involving Justices of the Peace Franklin Charles and Bissoon Birsingh who appeared before Justice Herbert Volney and were freed on charges of com-

mitting offences of this nature.

DOUBLE SURETY

Another disturbing trend in the bail system is the order of double and treble sureties by some magistrates in certain cases eg the one in which bail was set by the presiding magistrate in the sum of \$800,000. with two sureties ordered instead of one. Obviously, this has created in the minds of the public the perception that the presiding magistrate is totally oblivious of the prevailing market value of real estate, real property, thus, invariably posing in such cases an unnecessary burden, not only on the accused, but also, on the personnel involved in the preparation and execution of the necessary bail documents. In this context therefore, this can also lead to unwitting incarceration in some instances.

In another case the Hon Justice Stanley John revoked the decision of the magistrate requiring two sureties and granted bail with only one surety in the same amount, it was hotly debated in the media that because of the man's social status that he was

afforded that rare privilege of obtaining bail during the night. Fortunately however, this misconception was publicly cleared up by a legal authority who indicated that this legal remedy was both possible and practicable, and available to anyone wishing to invoke his rights and follow the statutory procedures.

CASH AS SURETY/COLLATERAL

To touch on another equally important and contradictory matter regarding bail, while the Bail Act as Well as the

Statutory Declaration clearly and unambiguously states that cash (viz Fixed Deposit Certificates and cash in bank as examples) can be accepted as collateral to bond an accused, magistrates throughout have invariably been rejecting such an option which leaves me to wonder, especially practicing Justices of the Peace, whether the magistrates themselves have not been denying justice to accused persons by this practice and thereby violating the law in the process. Or, are the oblivious or ignorant of this provision of the Bail Act No 18 of 1994 referred to

heretofore. Again one is left to ponder over the reason for this practice.

In conclusion, it is my fervent hope that the revelation of these hard facts would not only serve to enlighten the populace on some of these critical issues regarding bail, but would also serve to urge and to motivate the competent authorities viz the Law Commission and others to urgently rectify these anomalies with some degree of and expediency.

Haji RALPH D KHAN
Former President Justices of the Peace Association of Trinidad and Tobago (JOPATT)

Insulting, distasteful comments by the CJ

THE EDITOR,

RECENTLY, when the Court of Appeal sat to hear the appeal of the matter brought by Supt. Hubert Williams against the judgment of High Court Judge Anthony Lucky, the deliberations of the Chief Justice Clinton Bernard were given great publicity in the Press particularly.

While the matter was in its earlier stages, the Chief Justice made certain remarks which made it appear that Williams had absolutely no case to answer since Alfred Boodoosingh, the man who in fact handed him the gun, was the man who should be charged.

Therefore, from day one, he made it appear — whether inadvertently or otherwise — that his aim was to set Williams free, hence he attempted to divert the blame by focussing attention on Boodoosingh instead.

Even during this stage of the hearing, the Chief Justice made certain remarks about Justice Lucky that were not only uncomplimentary of his position, but were very distasteful and embarrassing to the fellow judge.

At this point, anyone following the proceedings closely could easily perceive a certain degree of vituperation against the High Court Judge, one belonging to the said fraternity to boot, whom I think should not be degraded in such a manner.

A man of the C.J.'s ilk should always be prepared to set a better example and avoid the use of such insulting and inconsiderate language.

Now that the matter has been concluded in the Appeal Court and the Chief Justice has given his ruling, in his judgement he apparently exemplified the pertinent errors of omission or commission of



Former CJ
CLINTON BERNARD

Justice Lucky, and has made it absolutely clear that Lucky was out to spite the man by taking everyone's evidence to the jury except that of the accused, in which he said that "he thought that the gun given to him was a toy gun".

At this stage, the Chief Justice seemed to have even overlooked the presumed wrongdoing of Boodoosingh.

In the process, he engaged in the use of language unbecoming of a man holding such a lofty position, apparently only with the visceral instinct of bringing down his fellow judge to his knees.

Thank God, he has reached the end of his tether!

What strikes me most as a colossal oversight of the CJ, however, is the fact that during the High Court hearing, evidence came out most conspicuously that during Supt. Williams' tenure of office, he served for many years as Head of the Criminal Investigation, where officers attached hereto are consistently given firearms to proceed on duty, and many are even armed when not on duty.

With his years of experience, one can virtually conclude that he is an expert at ballistics, due to his considerable experience in various departments of the Police Service.

The vital question that arises in my mind, therefore, is: Would a man in the mould of Supt. Williams, with his wealth

of experience in the Police Service, not be able to discern then the difference between a REAL GUN and a TOY GUN?

Therefore, any layman without any real ballistic knowledge and experience but who is rational would obviously, reasonably, and logically conclude that a real gun would certainly be much heavier than a toy gun, and that the Hon. Chief Justice failed to take this crucial factor into consideration.

As a result of the decision given down by the Chief Justice, one is also prompted to ask the very pertinent question: Why should there be no appeal?

Is it because, like in the Justice Crane case, that if the matter be taken to the Privy Council, that the decision might be reversed?

If not, then what's the fear?

It has been observed within recent times moreso, that the judiciary seems to be persistently sliding downwards; and that the type and quality of ugly, despicable, deplorable and repugnant attitude being exhibited by members of the judiciary against fellow judges; the very damaging remarks being hurled against one another in the public glare, will not contribute in any way to the enhancement of the lowly image of the judiciary at the present time.

If the population is to enjoy their credibility once more, then the confreres of this once highly-regarded fraternity must obviously set a better example.

And they should always bear in mind that their every utterance is being very closely monitored by us, members of the public.

RALPH D. KHAN, J. P.,
Rushworth Street,
San Fernando.

Hats off to Ganga Singh

THE EDITOR: It is rather interesting to note that the same weekend after the very first sitting of the House of Representatives by this new Government, and continuing for some time afterwards, the entire media more or less was bombarded with very scathing criticisms, even outright condemnation in some cases, of the bold decision taken by the new Minister of Public Utilities, the Hon Ganga Singh who indicated in Parliament that: "all WASA disconnection crews would now be made reconnection crews" and that all disconnected parties would be given until the end of March, 1996 in order to make good their payment of arrears with the exception of those truly impoverished persons and pensioners who genuinely cannot afford to pay their bills, indicating that these categories of persons shall be closely monitored before deciding upon the appropriate future action. The *Guardian* editorial, quite hurriedly may I add, was absolutely critical of this decision, which today is being praised in many quarters.

Consequently, having painstakingly cogitated upon the minister's decision, I slowly and rationally arrived at the intractable conclusion nevertheless, that the minister's directive not only provided a most gratifying and timely reprieve for many of our genuinely deserving citizens, many of whose water supply may have possibly been arbitrarily cut off, but one which in due course would inevitably prove to be a most opportune and prudent decision given the dismal performance of WASA over the years, and moreso now that new and almost immediate arrangements for this utility are on the horizon from all appearances.

It is my personal view therefore, that the minister having carefully studied the situation

over the years from his own personal experiences with WASA, as well as those of others in the community, but more so, this now being his ministerial mandate, fully recognises and understands the rather hapless plight of many of our citizens, especially the myriad of our old retired stalwarts. Many of whom have contributed a lifetime of labour and sacrifice in order to keep this nation afloat, as well as the extremely poor and unfortunate who really cannot afford to pay, but who today, despite their yeoman contribution, seem to be cast into an interminable state of oblivion by the uncaring "caring" governments of the past decades.

In the circumstances therefore, the minister's decision should be most welcome, since it provides a wonderful opportunity for both the young and old property owners alike, to start with a clean slate, that is, "to put their house in order so to speak," for when April, 1996 comes around, waterwise.

Taking into consideration WASA'S abysmal performance over the past decades therefore,

the minister's moratorium should instead be regarded as a blessing and a boon for the average citizen, except of course for the filthy rich bourgeoisie of this country. The minister in the circumstances, should be highly commended for his fortitude in taking such a decision as so eminently supported by a people's poll thereafter, particularly moreso, at a time like this, when all our citizens alike are looking forward to the Christmas holidays with a spirit of joy, love, happiness, sharing and caring. Such action could not be more opportune, and I say hats off to the minister of public utilities.

Haji Ralph D Khan
San Fernando

Write to:



Newsday
Chacon Street,
Port of Spain.

A tribute to Mr Panday

THE EDITOR: The main purpose of my letter is to take the opportunity through this medium to publicly congratulate the Hon Basdeo Panday, on his elevation to the position of Prime Minister; the Hon Kamla Persad-Bissessar, Attorney-General and his other members of Parliament and exuberant supporters of the United National Congress.

Singularly however, I wish to pay a very special tribute to Mr Panday himself for his enduring tenacity and his persistence in achieving his long last goal of being able to serve all the peoples of this nation, all and one at the same time.

Ever since his adventurous advent into the political landscape of this country, Mr Panday has invariably striven to create and to achieve a pluralistic combination of party members and supporters for whichever party he belonged, a dream which he always craved to realise, but with very little success however.

Panday was even severely criticised by many during more than one era of his political career in the past for picking rank outsiders so to speak,

including several persons of Afro-Trinidadian descent, to fill the position of Senators, all in his relentless quest to achieve that elusive unity amongst all the races in Trinidad and Tobago.

Emerging from this General Election scenario nevertheless, is a most wonderful, encouraging and gratifying sign, that of having witnessed the thousands of people from several areas like La Brea, peoples of different races, colour and creed who supported Mr Panday himself, all aspiring with one common aim; the aim to achieve one and the same common goal, the goal of unity in diversity, all in sync with the universal theme preached by the United National Congress Party, that of a government of national unity. It is rather interesting to see what the future holds for the nation and what would be the reaction of the cynics as time goes by.

May God bless our Nation and keep us all together as one.

HAJI RALPH D KHAN
San Fernando

It's a person's right to choose

THE EDITOR: Over the past few weeks I have followed with very mixed feelings the charges and counter charges made by certain candidates (including the Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago) of the more recognised and safely ensconced political parties of the nation hurling abuses and accusations against one another and accusing one another of switching allegiance from party to party. Some even being accused of "frog hopping" and "grasshopping" etc.

During the election campaign, we witnessed, not unexpectedly however, former ministers and members of the People's National Movement joining the ranks of the United National Congress, former National Alliance for Reconstruction ministers and other prominent members of their hierarchy joining the UNC, and former NAR and UNC members including a former UNC member of parliament joining the ranks of the PNM.

This rather unfortunate development should be spurned

since in a so-called highly literate society like ours people are being maligned, castigated, stigmatised and slandered, seemingly, having forgotten that simple basic law that one is free to join the party of his choice and to choose the people with whom he wishes to associate.

In order to make this point pristine clear, I wish to take the opportunity to quote from the Constitution of Trinidad and Tobago.

It is hereby recognised and declared that in Trinidad and Tobago there have existed and shall continue to exist, without discrimination, by reason of race, origin, colour, religion or sex, the following fundamental human rights and freedoms: namely:

- the right to join political parties and to express political views;
- freedom of movement;
- freedom of association and assembly.

The Constitution also states that no law may abrogate, abridge or infringe or authorise the abrogation, abridgment or infringement of any of the

rights and freedoms herein before recognised and declared.

In conclusion, one can very easily glean from the foregoing therefore, that it is the fundamental right of an individual or citizen of Trinidad and Tobago not only to join the political party of his choice, but that he also enjoys the freedom to associate with whomever he chooses.

Does it follow then that the candidates (as well as party leaders) who are graduates of various universities around the globe are ignorant of these common basic laws, or are they bent on destroying the youth of the nation by setting such horrible example?

Or is it that they are all following the commonplace practice and well accepted principle by Trinidadians that in Trinidad "laws are only made to be broken"?

If the latter be the case, as it seems to be, then woe be unto us. Quel Dommage' the French would say.

RALPH D KHAN,
San Fernando.

Express 7/11/95

Abuse of PM power

THE EDITOR: History would undoubtedly bear me out when I reiterate the fact that power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely.

Over the past decades, and particularly moreso since the mid-forties, when the citizens of this country were eventually afforded the sacred right and prized privilege to exercise their adult franchise in the process of voting for candidates of their choice in general elections to represent the various constituencies of the country, I recall that in the constituency of San Fernando West where I reside, (formerly comprising part of the constituency of Victoria) that the Returning Officer of this electoral district was invariably housed at the Town Hall now known as City Hall, the main administrative centre in the area.

Following therefore, the nomination papers for the various candidates representing this district were all submitted to the Returning Officer at this centre for scrutiny and for processing before being handed over to the Elections and Boundaries Commission.

For the upcoming general elections however, scheduled to take place on November 6 to the consternation and bewilderment of many persons in the district including the various candidates for San Fernando West, there has been an inexplicable and incomprehensible shift of venues, one that is neither reasonable nor logical.

ical.

In the circumstances, and to my amazement, the UNC candidate whom I volunteered to assist with his nomination papers advised me that the venue for this purpose was the San Fernando Technical School.

I argued against this point and informed him that I wished to differ since the San Fernando City Hall has from time immemorial been the headquarters for such activities for the San Fernando West constituency. It is only when he produced documentary evidence that I was convinced otherwise, so we then proceeded to the San Fernando Technical School instead where indeed the filing process was underway, and found out that the San Fernando East candidate had in fact been switched to the San Fernando City Hall.

In the foregoing circumstances therefore, if one were to judge from the scenario outlined, can any reasonable and intelligent person arrive at any other conclusion than to think that because of the tremendous political power which the Prime Minister wields that he imposed his colossal influence over the party hacks who

Cont'd

operate and administer this centre of administration i.e. the City Hall, in order to ditch the process.

Is this not tantamount to the abuse of both political power and privilege? Forcing the S/F West candidate who in truth and in fact resides in S/F West to go to San F'do East to file his nomination papers, when as a former resident of San Fernando East instead, the Prime Minister used his great influence to have the City Hall which is located in San Fernando West reserved for his personal use on that day.

This type of action only reinforces the perception of many that not only is the Prime Minister of

a particularly insular and domineering mould, but also reflects a similar characteristic of his party supporters who feel that they and they alone make up Trinidad and Tobago. How unfortunate!

Persons like the Prime Minister in such exalted positions therefore, should always be prepared to set better examples than to tread upon others' rights or upon those not in government or in power for "they that are humble shall be exalted and they that are exalted shall be humbled" some day.

Haji Ralph D. Khan
San Fernando

Did Gift resign or was he fired?

THE EDITOR,

SINCE the devilish, ill-conceived and whimsical firing of Ralph Maraj as Foreign Minister of Trinidad and Tobago, a lot of rather ugly political developments have taken place in such a short time in this country, and still continues to do so, leaving the Trinidad and Tobago public in an utter state of shock and confusion.

No one really knows what to think, or rather, what to believe at this time... coming, especially, from the Prime Minister and other politicians representing the people, for undoubtedly there is a very serious credibility gap existing at the moment.

Evolving out of this scenario, however, is the very complex question: Which sane, sober individual, given such a cushy job on a platter overnight, particularly moreso, just on the eve of his retirement, would, of his own free accord and volition, resign voluntarily, thereby surrendering his crowning glory and be doomed to oblivion until eternity... again of his own accord?

Something here smells really fishy and seems radically wrong, if not incredible, since there seems to be no reasonable or logical explanation forthcoming from the competent authority, or rather, no rationale for



anyone in such a lofty position to resign voluntarily overnight without undue pressures being put upon him to do so, notwithstanding the ex-

pressions of the media concerning the one-week successor Minister of Foreign Affairs.

In TnT, that's not the norm.

Logic, however, would make it appear more likely, and more reasonable, that in the face of all the negative publicity given to Gift as a personal unfit to hold such high office, which obviously would have entailed the building and fostering of international relationships, that the person behind all of this who really wields the power, that is the Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago, had absolutely no other alternative but to ask Gift to tender his resignation in order to vindicate himself, and so appear to be aloof from these happenings.

In order to project a better image of himself, therefore, the Prime Minister in order to avoid making another faux pas, in the space of one week, instead of firing the newly-appointed Foreign Minister, asked him to tender his resignation, thus mak-

ing it appear that Gift's resignation was voluntary.

Technically, though, even a blind man or the deaf would deduce from the concatenation of circumstances surrounding this resignation, that Gift was indeed fired by the Prime Minister of this country.

But why don't the politicians level with the people of this country?

Especially, moreso, the Prime

Minister in this case.

In this whole ugly episode, he apparently concerns himself with one thing only, and that is to save his own face.

Do the politicians really believe that the people of this country are indeed that stupid?

Then, in that case, it is important for the politicians to note "that you can fool some of the people some of the time, but not all of the people all of the time".

Politicians, please beware!

RALPH D. KHAN
24 Rushworth Street,
San Fernando.

A good move to fix police headquarters

THE EDITOR: Recently, I was able to breathe a sigh of relief. But it was more like a breath of fresh air having just come across one of the many infamous dumps now mushrooming throughout the entire country.

What brought about such feeling? One may be tempted to ask. Well, having read of the promise of the newly appointed Minister of National Security to refurbish the once stately looking Police Headquarters in Port of Spain - which incidentally was destroyed by insurrectionists in 1990 - exclusively for renewed police activities, I began to experience the breaking of a new dawn, observing a kind of extraordinary wisdom being exhibited by a new breed of people, one which we can only hope and pray would certainly continue to filter down to the other government ministries as well, in the immediate future.

This commendable move must be regarded as a most notable and significant breakaway from the rigid stance adopted by the Manning administration, either through their colossally chronic myopia, or Manning's own dogmatic, insensitive and dictatorial approach to many very sensitive issues facing the country, of which this was a very outstanding example. For here was Manning, inextricably bent on converting this once majestic building, formerly housing the Trinidad and

Tobago Police Headquarters, and most centrally located at that, into a museum or whatever, to suit his own whims and fancies, despite several stirring appeals by multifarious individuals and organisations, most notably being the first and second division police associations, both clamouring to have the building restored once more as the country's police headquarters. Sad to say, all appeals fell on deaf ears since they were all completely ignored by the government of the day. This new fledgling government therefore, especially the new Minister of National Security, deserves the highest commendation and praise for their most logical, reasonable and rational approach to this long simmering problem. Having positively addressed the situation, I am certain, would undoubtedly benefit the entire citizenry of Trinidad and Tobago.

In conclusion, if we were to accept this move as an example of the kind of positive action this fledgling government is prepared to take, then criticising and condemning them without giving them an opportunity to prove themselves is rather irrational and inconsiderate. Let's stop the bickering and give them a chance then.

**HAJI RALPH D KHAN,
San Fernando**

No voluntary resignation

THE EDITOR: Since the devilish, ill-conceived and whimsical firing of Ralph Maraj as Foreign Minister of Trinidad and Tobago, a lot of rather ugly political developments have taken place in such a short time in this country, and still continue, leaving the public in a state of shock and confusion.

No one really knows what to think, or what to believe at this time from the Prime Minister and other politicians representing the people; there is a serious credibility gap.

Evolving out of this scenario, however, is the very complex question.

Which sane, sober individual, given such a cushy job on a platter overnight, more so on the eve of his retirement, would of his own accord and volition resign voluntarily thereby surrendering his crowning glory and be doomed to oblivion?

In the face of all the negative publicity given to Gift as a person unfit to hold such high office which obviously would have entailed the building and fostering of international relationships, the Prime Minister had no alternative.

To avoid making another faux pas in the space of one week, instead of firing the newly appointed Foreign Minister, he asked him to tender his resignation, thus making it appear that Gift's resignation was voluntary. Many believe, though, that Gift was indeed fired by the Prime Minister.

Why don't the politicians level with the people of this country? Do they really believe the people are that stupid?

RALPH D KHAN, San Fernando

LETTERS

Maraj's ideals will set him free

THE EDITOR: I shall greatly appreciate if you would please publicly air my personal views on the firing of former Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Honourable Ralph Maraj which I regard as a matter of national significance, and to a lesser extent the distasteful and unjustifiable dismissal of Mr Alexander Lau, our Honorary Consul in Hong Kong.

Firstly however, I wish to state that I am neither a member of the ruling PNM nor the UNC Opposition party, nor was I ever, notwithstanding the fact that I formerly served as a member of the Senate under the UNC banner.

I have personally known Alexander Lau from his very early youthful days in Debe and that he has matured into a most outstanding citizen of the highest order, a man of lofty ideals and noble principles, and above all, a most polished and refined gentleman dedicated to serving his people. He has never turned his back against Trinidad and Tobago and Trinidadians particularly, whether visiting Hong Kong for pleasure, business reasons or otherwise.

Gleaning from the various utterances of the Prime Minister himself any intelligent individual can easily deduce that the Prime Minister having bypassed the then Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ralph Maraj, whose portfolio embraced the various Trinidad and Tobago High Commissions and Consulates abroad, got a "VAPS" and decided on another of one of his jaunts, this time to the Far East with some of his acolytes, especially more so, since he was prepared to demonstrate the disdain, for the Minister whom in my view he never had the courtesy to consult concerning such a visit. Hence, his wrath in not being received by our good samaritan in Hong Kong.

Televised Broadcast

Had he done so, then certainly he would have been aware of the consul's absence from Hong Kong, and furthermore, that Lau was at the time enjoying his sabbatical having duly notified the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

In his most recent televised broadcast to the nation the Prime Minister made bold to mention to the nation in his address that "he did not fire anyone by whim or fancy, and that he had achieved what he set out to do." If therefore his objective was to deride, and publicly humiliate these two gentlemen, then he has certainly achieved his objective with great aplomb for this is indeed exactly what he has done.

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His statement that he had earmarked for the very said consul an even bigger, better and higher position, was a clever afterthought. At this point I feel greatly impelled to mention the old but true adage: "You can fool some of the people some of the time, but not all the people all the time."

Now, I turn to the unceremonious sacking of the Foreign Minister Ralph Maraj. At a time when the PNM had sunk to its lowest ebb, and their popular support had all but completely evaporated the party, the incumbent Prime Minister sought the services of people like Ralph Maraj (and Linda Daboolal to a lesser extent) a man who was not only well-known in the country but also well-respected by his people. But with politics in its present state, or rather at the time of the 1991 elections, with two very well known candidates having been chosen by parties opposed to the PNM, Manning knew then that with the peculiar composition of the voting population of the San Fernando West constituency that he had to field a candidate of East Indian descent in order to capture that seat, since the Indian votes in the constituency would be so badly split among three candidates — all of East Indian descent — that with his share of the Indian votes combined together with the votes of the diehard fanatical PNM supporters, particularly those residing in the government housing estates, Ralph Maraj's seat would be almost guaranteed.

Now that he has been used to advantage, the former Minister has been discarded. Let me state that these are the real cold facts, and that I do not wish to engage in a war of race in which I have never been a party heretofore.

The media for some time now quite rightly

speculated that the Foreign Minister was placed in the "Dog House" by the Prime Minister, but what put the icing on the cake in my view, was after the departure of the Prime Minister and his entourage to Haiti on another of his pleasure trips, when the Foreign Minister was quizzed by a television reporter as to the reason for his omission from the contingent he replied, "I was not invited." This veritable truth from the Minister seems to have made the Prime Minister so indignant that from then on I suppose he could not even bear the sight of the man. So it was only a question of time before the inevitable came to pass.

Need I mention about the then Foreign Minister's lecture at the Raja Yoga Centre which focussed on leadership. Well, I read his speech comprehensively, and found it most instructive and exhilarating as well as enlightening. But again, in my view, this lecture cemented the whole ugly episode.

Let me state that knowing Ralph Maraj as I do, I know in my heart that the truth and the true ideals which the then Minister has expressed and exemplified, especially on the occasions referred to heretofore shall set him free, and that he would once more return to a life of peace and tranquility to serve his people in a more rewarding manner earning God's reward instead. Let the aspiring "apaches" beware at the same time however, that "cockroach have no right in fowl business."

RALPH D KHAN
Rushworth St
San Fernando

A lesson for us all

THE EDITOR: I wish to preface this letter by reminding our readers of a recent publication penned by me in 1995 October, 30, the last line of which read this way: "They that are humble shall be exalted and they that are exalted shall be humbled", some day. In this message, there is a serious lesson for us all, one which we should perpetually keep foremost in our minds.

Undoubtedly, many people would easily recognise the source of origin of this admonition and though the actual words may differ somewhat in different religious texts, the meaning, nevertheless, is indeed exactly the same.

Today, just barely a week or so after this publication, the current political transition taking place in Trinidad and Tobago has made me realise the depth of these few words, for what we have indeed witnessed is nothing but a living example of such a reality.

The main purpose of my letter, however, is to take the opportunity through this medium to publicly congratulate the Hon Basdeo Panday, our brand new Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago on his elevation to the position of Prime Minister; the Hon Kamla Persad-Bissessar, his Attorney General; his other members of Parliament, not forgetting Mervyn Dymally and the flamboyant Ralph Maraj especially; and last but not least, the energetic and exuberant supporters of the United National Congress, this notwithstanding the negative attitude of some members of our population, bearing in mind that "the only thing that remains

constant in life is change itself".

Singularly however, I wish to pay a very special tribute to Mr Panday himself for his enduring tenacity and his persistence in achieving his goal of being able to serve all the peoples of this nation, all and one at the same time.

Ever since his adventurous advent into the political landscape of this country, Mr Panday has invariably striven to create a pluralistic combination of party members and supporters for whichever party he belonged, but with very little success however.

Panday was even severely criticised by many during more than one era of his political career in the past for picking "rank outsiders" including several persons of Afro-Trinidadian descent, to fill the position of Senators, all in his relentless quest to achieve that elusive unity amongst all the races in Trinidad and Tobago.

Emerging from this general election scenario nevertheless, is a most wonderful, encouraging and gratifying sign, that of having witnessed the thousands and thousands of people from several areas like La Brea, Port-of-Spain South etc, the virtual domain of the PNM, peoples of different races, colours and creeds support Mr Panday himself, all aspiring with one common aim, the aim to achieve one and the same common goal, the goal of unity in diversity, all in sync with the universal theme preached by the United National Congress Party, that of a government of national unity.

It is rather interesting to see what

the future holds for the nation and what would be the reaction of the cynics as time goes by.

Having witnessed on the television screen, the rather stern warnings given by Mr Manning to his supporters at Balisier House after the results of the elections were announced, I feel it incumbent and a fitting climax as well to repeat part of a message delivered at an interfaith service on behalf one of the candidates on that Sunday before the elections which reads as follows:

"O beneficent and most merciful God, as we draw nearer and nearer to the 1995 general elections, we continue to pray for peace and harmony. We seek Thine Blessings towards peace, progress and

prosperity, both physical and spiritual, for this fair land of ours and through Thine infinite mercy O God, we pray for Thine protection and Thine shelter from the ravages and the vagaries of wanton destruction and rampage, looting and rioting among our peoples, so that we may continue to dwell in unity and in love, with the common aim and purpose of focussing our attention on the less fortunate, the less articulate, the downtrodden, the poor and the oppressed, providing equally for all our peoples of this nation."

May God Bless our nation and keep us all together as one.

HAJI RALPH D KHAN
San Fernando.

TUESDAY MARCH 5, 1991

IN PARLIAMENT

Senator wants boost for social services

By **GEORGE HARVEY**
OPPOSITION SENATOR
Haji Ralph Khan has termed as "educational genocide" any action that deprived children from going to school. He queried whether the Domestic Violence Bill made provision for the denial of education problem now highlighted by teachers taking industrial action.

Senator Khan was speaking in the Senate debate on the Bill last Tuesday. He called for a proper social services system and improved facilities

including family counselling before implementing the Bill.

The United National Congress (UNC) member said the Bill was a classic case of "putting the cart before the horse." He said it emphasised the legal rather than the social side.

Extra Work

Senator Khan told the Senate it was possible that Government would worsen the problem by giving magistrates the power to grant protection to victims. He

said that the magistrate's courts were already overburdened. Domestic violence litigation cases, he said, would add to the backlog of cases.

He explained that extra work for the magistrates could result in the law creating further injustice while seeking to dispense justice.

Senator Khan pointed out that the main issue was not whether the bill was good or bad "but rather, whether the existing structure of the magistrate's court can adequately deal



HAJI RALPH KHAN

...spoke during debate

with this additional responsibility."

He called for establishment of a family court to deal with domestic matters behind closed doors to protect the family. He further asked for:

Specialised training for magistrate's and auxiliary personnel in the various social, emotional and psychological aspects of domestic violence.

RALPH KHAN -

J.P.'S AND THE NEED FOR JUSTICE

Page 16 NEWSDAY Wednesday July 17, 1996

NEWS

Some JPs illiterate, says PRO of JPs Association

THE Attorney-General has been asked to probe the activities of corrupt justices of the peace who rip off clients of large sums of money, thereby bringing the profession into disrepute. As a start, the JP Association wants the Attorney-General to set up a commission of enquiry, with aggrieved parties being summoned to give evidence.

In his nine-page letter to the AG on behalf of the association, the Public Relations Officer, Ralph Khan submitted a 13-point plan which he believes could help change the scenario.

He charged that governments of the past had appointed

a number of JPs in the move to provide adequate quality service to the population.

But according to Khan, this move seemed to have had a disastrous effect. Moreover, he claimed a vast majority of these appointments were apparently made in return for political patronage to and by government. According to Khan, some of the appointees were totally illiterate, some semi-literate, and others of questionable character.

The association urged the Attorney-General to withhold proposed appointments of new justices of the peace, "until some semblance of sanity can be restored among these corrupt and conniving collusionists".

NEWS

JPs and AG disagree over payment for services

By RICHARD CHARAN

ATTORNEY-GENERAL Ramesh Lawrence Maharaj and the Justices of the Peace Association of Trinidad and Tobago (JOPATT) are at loggerheads over whether JPs should charge for their services.

Even though the Attorney-General has told the JPs that they should execute their duties free of charge, association President, Haji Ralph Khan, said that remuneration is a must.

Maharaj was on hand at the Petrotrin Staff Club, Wednesday night, where JOPATT installed into office their newly elected executive. Also present was Public Utilities Minister, Ganga Singh, Permanent Secretary in the Attorney-General's office, Kemchan Ramdath, and head of the Faculty of Behavioural Sciences, at UWI, Professor Ramesh Deosaran.

The newly installed officers are President, Ralph Khan; First Vice President, Ramdath Mathura; Second Vice President, Fredrick Powder; Secretary, Roy Nathai; Assistant Secretary, Ferdinand Rajaram; Treasurer, Yusuff Mohammed; Public Relations Officer, Morrisa Singh; and members, Hugo John, Ramesh Bhagwandeem, Bissoon Birsingh, Frank St Louis, Fitz Arthur Saunders, Nazir Mohammed, Winston Best, and Dexter Soodeem.

Maharaj told the 72 members of the association that only persons with a real desire to give service to the

community free of charge should hold the office of Justice of the Peace. "Such a person should not seek to be a Justice of the Peace because he is looking for a source of income or wants to supplement his income," Maharaj said.

But Haji Khan said that he had submitted recommendations to the Attorney General, that consideration be given to JPs to have some sort of remuneration.

"We are witnessing enormous pressure... due to the frequency with which JPs are continually summoned to perform their judicial functions resulting from the spiralling increase in crimes of a violent nature, and this role becoming not only more onerous, but is also becoming a great financial burden," said Khan.

In a meeting with the Attorney General late last year, Khan said that several matters were discussed, including a stipend, a scale of fees for judicial duties, and travel and subsistence when called to duty.

The recommendations are being given active consideration by the Attorney General, it was revealed.

Khan explained that some JPs spent long hours witnessing statements being given by persons in police custody, and at the courts giving evidence in Preliminary Inquiries, without travel or meal allowances.

Other recommendations put forward by JOPATT are the preparations of manuals for JPs, the issuing Identification Cards, training programmes, proper accommodations, and dignified treatment from police officers.

Justice, dignity and decorum

TO HEAR Ralph Khan tell it, the power of a Justice of the Peace is awesome.

Justices of the Peace are appointed and removed by the President. They are Commissioners of Affidavits for the area in which they are appointed. They can, among other things, issue warrants and summonses for court appearances, fix the amount of bail for an accused person and take recognizances or bonds for people with court matters.

"In a way they perform the duties of magistrates and judges. About the only thing they don't do is conduct a trial and deliver judgement," observes Khan.

He should know. He is the recently elected president of the Justices of the Peace Association of Trinidad and Tobago.

The office of the JP goes back a long way: This year marks the one hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the first appointments of JPs in this country and before the Second World War several actually served as magistrates.

Up to two decades ago there were relatively few holders of the office.

But with the upsurge in violent crimes in recent years their numbers have more than quadrupled. Khan points out that there are now more than 70 JPs operating in central and south Trinidad.

It can be a demanding job: the holder of the office must be prepared to be on call at all times of the day and night and to see a court matter, in which he or she is involved, through to the finish—regardless of how long it takes.

And all the duties of a JP must, or should, be performed without pay. It is a labour of love.

As Attorney General Ramesh Lawrence Maharaj noted at the



Down South

with
**JEROME
TANG LEE**

Association's recent installation ceremony at the Petrotrin Staff Club, Pointe-a-Pierre:

"Only persons who have a real desire to give service to the community free of charge should hold the office of Justice of the Peace. Such a person should have a source of income to meet his needs and the time to devote to community service.

"A person should not seek to be a JP because he is looking for a source of income or wants to supplement his income."

It is not, of course, a perfect world and that demand for commitment and dedication to duty without pay has not always attracted people with unimpeachable and unblemished character.

The upsurge in crime and the increasing demands for the services of a JP have given rise to a booming business and fierce competition among some practitioners.

Market forces now rule.

There is a "resident JP" or an emissary soliciting clients at many of the nation's court houses, admits Khan.

Corrupt practices are said to abound in such situations. Among the allegations against wayward JPs: they advertise their services, they use false deeds for granting bail, charge 10 percent of the bail fixed as fee for granting bail—thus providing an incentive to fix bail at a much higher level than normal.

A Commission of Inquiry under the chairmanship of Justice Ralph Narine is currently, among other terms of reference, examining the role and functions of Justices of the Peace with a view to preventing corruption and considering allegations of corruption made against practitioners.

A report by the Commission is to be submitted to President Arthur N.R. Robinson by May 7.

Khan and his Association want to restore the good name of the JP.

For one he wants to see tougher standards set to be met by anyone aspiring to the ranks.

Healthy bank balances and a better understanding of the law are high up on that list of new standards.

"At present there are no set criteria," Khan laments, and he admits that there are a few practitioners who are "not too well educated, of questionable character and who do not know or care much about the law."

A proper training programme instituted by government in collaboration with the University of the West Indies through the Faculty of Social Sciences is one way the association intends to improve the lot and image of the JP.

Another is through a handbook for the guidance of JPs which is being produced by the Ministry of the Attorney General.

Proposals have also been made for proper JP identification cards to be issued by the Attorney General's Department and the payment of a stipend for expenses incurred when travelling to court, as well as subsistence.

The aim is to restore "dignity and decorum" to the office of JP and respect from the populace.

It is a challenging task, Khan admits. And it will take some doing to win back that esteem and honour once help by Justices of the Peace.

NEWS

JPs eagerly await word from AG

By *RICHARD CHARAN*

THE Justices of the Peace Association (JOPATT) has despatched a letter to Attorney-General, Ramesh Lawrence Maharaj, asking that he fast track plans to substantially increase the competence and functions of JPs.

In a document signed by JOPATT's president, Haji Ralph Khan, it was pointed out that proposals put forward to the Attorney General several months ago, have not been dealt with expeditiously.

The AG recently revealed plans for the issuing of handbooks and identifications cards for JPs, but gave no definite date for when it would come on stream.

Khan said he was happy to learn of this, but association members

were now eagerly awaiting word on when the handbooks would be ready for distribution.

He suggested that an opportune time could be at JOPATT's Annual General Meeting, scheduled for August 24, where the photographs of JPs could be taken for the IDs.

As for the proposed training programme, Khan said that any information regarding plans for training would be welcomed, since members felt that proper training was long overdue, especially for the more recent appointees.

Another matter of urgent concern, Khan explained, was that of payment of stipend/fees to JPs.

He asked that the matter be dealt with quickly, because of the frequency with which certain JPs

are called to perform various functions, especially relating to court attendances involving manslaughter and murder cases.

"Such matters are called for hearing over and over again in the courts before determination, which has proven not only to be exigent in such circumstances, but also very uneconomical, resulting in the automatic erosion of one's basic income.

"We ponder the plight of those merely eking out a livelihood on their meagre pensions, a category into which most JPs fall".

Khan emphasised that the payments were critical to assist in the elimination of corruption.

The JOPATT president also asked that the AG pursue the proposals to have JPs appointed Marriage Officers.

JPs pledge support to Community Police

By RICHARD CHARAN

THE JUSTICES of the Peace Association of Trinidad and Tobago (JOPATT) has pledged its full support to the Community Police Unit initiated by the Police Service.

President of JOPATT, Haji Ralph Khan, on Sunday revealed that his association had held high level talks with Commissioner Noor Kenny Mohammed, ACP Hilton Guy, and other senior members of the service, and had articulated their willingness to assist in any way possible.

Haji Khan was at the time delivering a reading and prayer at an Interfaith Service organised by the Southern Division Community Policing Unit, and the Trinidad and Tobago Association of Women Police. Attending Sunday's function were High Court judge, Anthony Lucky, Snr Supt Mervyn Ghatt, councillors attached to the San Fernando City Corporation and retired and active police officers and their families.

The service, held at Palm's Club, San Fernando, was themed "Lets Stand Together", and took the form of prayers by members of the Hindu, Muslim, Christian, and Bahai faiths.

Inspiring addresses also came from ASP Alleyne-Lambert and Sgt Christine McMillan.

The service, the audience was told, was held as part of the effort to project a new and friendlier side of the police force, through cultural and religious concerts. The importance was not lost to Haji Khan, who said that the community approach was too long in coming, since many times, persons wanting to give vital information to the police have been turned off by their approach.

He asked that the audience play an active role in crime detection and prevention, and spread the word that communicating with the police was important.

Crackdown on corrupt cops, JPs

COMMISSIONER of Police Nour Kenny Mohammed is to investigate a series of serious malpractices involving a clique of corrupt Justices of the Peace, police officers and professional bailors believed to be working in collusion to issue illegal search and ar-

rests warrants as well as exorbitant "bail" fees. This charge was brought to the attention of Commissioner Mohammed by the Justices of the Peace Association (JPA) at a meeting last Wednesday at Police Headquarters.

Quoting a number of malpractices, Khan explained that at certain police stations throughout the country, when a person is arrested, the corrupt police officers contacts his "special" JP and fixes an exorbitant bail fee, sometimes setting

bail at thousands of dollars more than is really required. In such instances, the police officers gets a cut. He added that in several instances professional bailors use illegal deeds, which may already be tied up in other matters before the court. As if this is not enough, the relatives of the incarcerated person may walk with their own JP, only to be told that "documents have not been processed" which, according to Khan, is only a stumbling block to stop the relatives from getting the services from their own JP.

The JPA, which was also represented by the First Vice President Ramdath Mathura, and Public Relations Officer Morris Singh, complained to the Commissioner that there were instances where JPs, upon the

request of the police, signed blank arrests and search warrants. Khan said this is against the law.

He added that while the errant JPs were in the minority, there were those who refused to go to the ID Parade Centres where they are supposed to be present under the law, because they are not paid a fee.

Some of them will only go if they are paid a fee," he said, adding that there were 108 registered JPs but only 72 belonged to the Association.

Haji Khan said that a Report has been submitted to the Attorney General Ramesh Lawrence Maharaj by a Commission of Enquiry established earlier this year to carry out investigations into the profession.

This report, although submitted to the AG on May 7 is still to be tabled in Parliament. Other members of the police executive who met with the JPA included Commissioner Mohammed, Deputy Commissioner Hilton Guy, Assistant Commissioners Cyrractus Liverpool, Norton Regist, Hubert Williams and Mervyn Giuseppi.

Haji Khan described the meeting as successful and very cordial. Other topics discussed were the establishing of proper systems and procedures for processing bail at police stations; the role of the JP at ID Parades; examining the role of the JP in Community Policing and the preparation of a list of JPs for display at Police Stations. This list must be accessible to the public. The Commissioner has promised to continue to hold meetings with the JPA.

Justices of Peace: Report misleading — no forms at police stations

By MIKEY MAHABIR

THE JUSTICES of the Peace Association, through its President Haji Ralph Khan, has described as "misleading and grossly erroneous" a report purported to have been made by the Ministry of the Attorney-General, which said that statutory forms were available at all police stations.

Khan said that checks at the various police stations, particularly those in Victoria, revealed that not a single form was available. In fact, he said, he was informed by the police officers at the stations, that they knew nothing about the forms and had none available.

"Now, we have to continue making our own arrangements to prepare the relevant forms to do our work, specifically for the granting of bail" said Khan.

He said because of the "misleading" information the Association has called an emergency executive meeting for Sunday, August 17, at 9.30 am to take place in San Fernando, to discuss this latest development and then issue a statement on the matter.

A report stated that the Ministry of the Attorney General said that new forms were in fact printed and have been available since the passing of the Bail Act No 18 of 1994. Haji Khan had complained that the forms being used were below standard statutory forms.

EXPRESS November 11, 1998

JP Khan quits under 'pressure'

South/Central Bureau

HAJI Ralph D Khan, president of the Justices of the Peace Association of Trinidad and Tobago (JPATT), has tendered his resignation to President Arthur NR Robinson citing "untold pressure" brought to bear on himself and his family.

Khan, who threw in the sponge yesterday with the

aim, he stated, of salvaging his "impeccable character" has been a Justice of the Peace for the magisterial district of Victoria West since March 1993.

Khan was reluctant yesterday to go into details of the "untold pressure" he was complaining about but promised to tell about "all the intimidation" he and his family had been suffering since the set-

ting up of a probe into corruption among Justices of the Peace. He said he will bare all at a news conference today in San Fernando at 10 a.m.

Khan is the managing director of Ralico Insurance Services Ltd, a general agent for the Maritime Financial Group, a member of the Million Dollar Round Table and operates a successful travel agency.

Statutory Declaration forms needed

THE EDITOR: An article appearing on Page 4 of the *Newsday* dated the 31 July, 1997 headlined "Outdated Forms and Appeal Court upholds Bail forfeiture" and supported by another appearing elsewhere, indeed, makes amusing reading, notwithstanding its serious implications, and as well, pointing out one of the serious oversights of the powers that be, Trinidad and Tobago having existed as an independent nation for almost 25 years to date.

This observation by our learned Justices at the Appeal (Court) in San Fernando, recently, followed by the aforementioned publications, clearly underline the stark reality of the perennial problems faced by serving Justices of the Peace throughout Trinidad and Tobago in accessing the appropriate forms which are absolutely necessary for the proper discharge of their functions, particularly moreso, when faced with the process of granting bail to incarcerated persons, entitled to bail.

In the prevailing circumstance, there is no fixed place, or authority, through which a Justice of the Peace can readily acquire these forms "even though it means paying for them from our own pockets" since frequent calls to the Government Printery are often greeted with the same retort: "we no longer print or carry these forms."

To compound this problem, when a Justice of the Peace visits any of the various Magistracies in the country with the object of procuring a set of the relevant forms, he is almost invariably informed that "they too are using photocopies and have only limited stock," and very often, more often than not, these forms are sub standard. Therefore, it prompts one to ask the question: Where, or to whom can a Justice of the Peace turn to obtain such forms required for their everyday use, and for different pur-

poses to boot, eg the granting of bail, taking recognisance, and for allowing someone to sign his/her own bail bond in cases where minor crimes have been committed etc, just to name a few examples.

In early 1995, when the "new" Bail Act #18 of 1994 was launched at a joint meeting of all Justices of the Peace, senior members of the Police Service, and senior Legal Counsel representing the State, the dire need for the printing, supply and availability of the new Statutory Declaration Forms (which complemented the Bail Act) was greatly emphasised by our Association as well as all the other parties, and it was sincerely promised by the then Parliamentary Secretary to the Attorney General that 6,000 of these forms would be printed and distributed throughout every police station in the country for use by JPs.

However, it is rather frustrating to note, that up to this day, this has not materialised. Further to the above, most of the other forms currently available to us through whatever means, continue to be those same obsolete forms used since colonial times, on which one is required to make several alterations in order to make them relevant to current needs and times.

In the existing scenario therefore, as President of the Justices of the Peace Association of Trinidad and Tobago, and on behalf of the members of the Justices of the Peace Association, I am making a very special appeal to the competent authorities, presumably, the office of the Attorney General, to address this matter which has been long overdue, with the urgency that it deserves, bearing in mind, the overall interest of the entire judicial and legal system in the country.

HAJI RALPH KHAN
President — JOPATT

AG responds to JPOTT complaints

THE Ministry of the Attorney General has responded to Haji Ralph Khan, Head of the Justices of the Peace Association of Trinidad and Tobago, (JPOTT), who complained to the AG of below standard statutory forms at the

various magistracies.

In a news release carried by the *Guardian* on Tuesday August 5, Haji Khan expressed deep concern over the sub-standard and unavailability of forms.

The Ministry of the Attorney General however,

said that new forms were in fact printed and have been available since the passing of the Bail Act No18 of 1994.

The Ministry also stated that the forms are available at all police stations.

Page 6 NEWSDAY Tuesday August 5, 1997

NEWS

JPs: Best way to mark Independence — issue new bail forms

By NEWSDAY REPORTER

THE JUSTICES of the Peace Association of Trinidad and Tobago (JOPATT) feels that the best way to celebrate Independence Day this year, would be to issue bail forms reflecting the country's true constitutional status.

The Association was responding to a Court of Appeal case in San Fernando last week, where the use of outdated forms by JPs was criticised.

JOPATT President, Haji Ralph Khan said that he had read an article carried in *Newsday* "with amusement", since his members have for years been clamouring for updated forms to be made available.

The forms are given to arrested individuals by JPs during the periods where a judge or magistrate is not available to

hear their applications for bail.

The Appeal Court, presided over by Justices Zainool Hosein and Mustapha Ibrahim had commented that a bail form used by former JP and now deceased, Mulchan Suechan, "did not reflect the correct position of Trinidad and Tobago".

The form used words such as "Her Majesty's magistrates, and "our Lady the Queen, Her heirs and successor".

Haji Khan identified an even more serious situation regarding forms, saying that they simply were not available.

"The availability of forms have been a perennial problem, even though we brought up the matter at symposiums and seminars with the former Attorney-General, when the new Bail Act was of 1994 was being introduced. "We made it clear that without the forms, there would be tremendous problems, but up to this day,

it is impossible to get the forms."

Haji Khan said that the Association made further representation for forms to be printed and made available at the various police stations where JPs must visit to process arrested persons.

However, what has instead been done, is that outdated, photo copied and sub-standard forms have been provided. "It is a totally intolerable situation", Haji Khan said.

He added that currently, the sub-standard forms were also in short supply at the Magistrates Courts.

He asked that the relevant authority arrange with the Government Printery to mass produce the simple documents quickly and see that they are given to JPs.

The forms could be handed out, he said, during the regular meetings of the JP's Association.

CJ should set a better example

THE EDITOR: While the appeal brought by Senior Supt Hubert Williams against the sentence of High Court judge Anthony Lucky was in its earlier stages, Chief Justice Clinton Bernard made certain remarks which made it appear that Williams had absolutely no case to answer, since Alfred Boodoosingh, the man who handed him the gun, was the man who should be charged.

From day one, he made it appear, whether inadvertently or otherwise, that his aim was to set Williams free. Hence he attempted to divert the blame by focusing attention on Boodoosingh instead.



Even during this stage of the hearing, the Chief Justice made certain remarks about Justice Lucky that were not only uncomplimentary of his position but were also very distasteful and embarrassing to the judge. At this point, anyone following the proceedings closely could easily perceive a certain degree of vituperation against the High Court judge, one belonging to the said fraternity to boot, whom I think should not be degraded in such a manner.

A man of the CJ's ilk should always be prepared to set a better example and avoid the use of such insulting and inconsiderate language.

The Chief Justice in his ruling apparently exemplified the perceived errors of omission or commission of Justice Lucky. He has made it absolutely clear that Lucky J was out to spite the man by taking everyone's evidence to the jury except that of the accused in which he said that "he thought that the gun given to him was a toy gun".

At this stage, the Chief Justice seemed to have even overlooked the presumed wrongdoing of Boodoosingh. But in the process he used language unbecoming of a man holding such a lofty position, apparently only with the visceral instinct of bringing down his fellow judge to his knees. Thank God, a person as vituperative as that has reached the end of his tether.

What strikes me most as a colossal oversight of the CJ, however, is the fact that, during the High Court hearing, the evidence came out most conspicuously that during Senior Supt Williams's tenure of office, he served for many years as head of

Criminal Investigations. In that department, officers are consistently given firearms to proceed on duty and many are even armed when not on duty.

With his years of experience, one can virtually conclude that he is an expert at ballistics due to his considerable experience in various departments of the Police Service.

The vital question that arises in my mind, therefore, is: would a man in the mould of Senior Supt Williams, with his wealth of experience, not be able to discern then the difference between a *real gun* and a *toy gun*?

Any layman who is rational would conclude that a real gun would certainly be much heavier than a toy gun, and that the Chief Justice failed to take this crucial factor into consideration.

As a result of the Chief Justice's decision, one is also prompted to ask: why should there be no appeal? Is it because, as in the Justice Crane case, if the matter be taken to the Privy Council, the decision might be reversed? If not, then what's the fear?

It has been observed within recent times more so, that the judiciary seems to be persistently sliding downwards; and that the very damaging remarks being hurled against one another in the public glare will not contribute in any way to the enhancement of the lowly image of the judiciary at the present time. The confreres of this once highly regarded fraternity must obviously set a better example and always bear in mind that their every utterance is being closely monitored by us, members of the public.

RALPH D KHAN-J.P.
San Fernando

JP body tells AG act on corruption

The Justices of the Peace Association has written Attorney General Ramesh Lawrence Maharaj about corrupt practices involved in the bail system and collusion between some Justices of the Peace (JPs) and police officers.

It has called for a commission of enquiry into these practices and wants Maharaj to delay appointing JPs and to implement several recommendations.

The recommendations and allegations are contained in a memorandum submitted to Maharaj by the association's public relations officer, Haji Ralph Khan, dated June 4. Khan said there was evidence of collusion between certain police officers and JPs, especially in San Fernando, where relatives of accused persons were fleeced of several thousands of dollars.

He added that when honest JPs turned up at police stations to fix or grant bail, they were usually informed that the necessary documents were not ready. This was a delaying tactic to allow the police to use their "own JP", he said.

Khan claimed, too, that certain Clerks of the Peace deliberately withheld bail approval until they could locate a JP of their choice. He noted that he recently had such a case in which a young, first-time offender ended up among "real seasoned and hardened, notorious criminals".

Noting that mayors and chairmen of regional corporations automatically became JPs or commissioners of affidavits, Khan told Maharaj he wanted him to

Cont'd

clarity whether these persons could continue to act in these roles after demitting office.

"Nothing short of a commission of enquiry, we dare say, would suffice," he said.

In addition to requesting that the attorney general delay appointing new JPs, the association has proposed that the government, in collaboration with UWI, institute a mandatory training course for existing and proposed JPs.

To deal with "professional bailors" who roam from district to district using the same deed for the purpose of facilitating bail, the association suggested that a comprehensive list of such persons be compiled and be posted up at every police station, and that a deed used for the purpose of granting bail should be stamped with a special seal to prevent re-use.

Khan said the association wanted JPs to be appointed for a specific period and that suitably qualified JPs should be appointed lay magistrates to hear certain summary offences, and marriage officers.

He added that the licences of JPs should be revoked if they were found to be indulging in any unethical or immoral practice.

The association also wants the Attorney General's Office to give it due recognition and to consider making it compulsory for every JP to be a member.

LETTERS

JPs being denied judicial rights

THE EDITOR: The Hon. Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs, c/o The Attorney General's Office, 24-28 Richmond Street, Port-of-Spain.

Dear Sir,

Due to recent exasperating experiences at the San Fernando Police Station Sir, I feel impelled to communicate with you as a matter of urgency seeking your most kind assistance as well as your guidance and enlightenment on certain critical issues.

Following are the details of one of several instances of its kind occurring over the weekend:-

On Saturday the June 17th, (that's over the last long weekend when 43 persons were arrested by the Southern Division Police -- See attached clipping) I was summoned at home approximately 11.30 am in order to arrange for the granting of Bail with a Surety for someone who was on \$2,000 bail having failed to attend court on a minor traffic violation resulting in arrest by warrant.

Despite the tendering of a recent Certified Copy of a Deed issued by the office of the Registrar General and the presentation of Land and Building Tax Receipt for the said property indicating that the taxes were duly paid for the year ending 1994, by the bailor, Ivan Charles of 33 Claude Street, La Romaine, the Police Corporal on duty at the station at that time, Cpl. Gittens #6698 refused to accept the above documents stating that the Land and Building Tax should have been paid for the year 1995 as well, and primarily on this ground, he prevented me from granting bail to the defendant.

To say the least, in my most humble view Sir, I regard this not only as being tantamount to an infringement of my judicial rights as a Justice of the Peace, but as a denial of the fundamental rights and freedom of the individual (many of them hav-

ing fallen victims to this injustice over the said weekend).

Having thus failed in the interim, I proposed an alternative measure. Therefore, having inquired of the bailor who gave me an affirmative reply, I indicated to the officer referred to heretofore that the bailor has a current Fixed Deposit Certificate held at the Bank of Nova Scotia, San Fernando, to the value of \$11,000 (which can be provided) and that this security was acceptable in view of the new Statutory Declaration in use, more so in this particular instance where the bail was in the sum of \$2,000 only. This, may I state, was only after having shown the officer the relevant sections of the new Statutory Declaration issued subsequent to the New Bail Act, No. 18 of 1994 with which you would certainly be quite familiar.

At this juncture his response was: "I don't know about that." I then desperately tried to get him to read the appropriate section when he retorted once more, "I don't know about that, and I am working by the rules from downstairs." No matter how hard I tried, he persisted in rejecting my consistent but humble appeals. My pleas were all in vain.

Incidentally, this rule was taken from

Write to:



*Newsday
Chacon Street,
Port of Spain.*

among others from the Station's Notice Board appropriately headed: Granting of Bail: When J.Ps. Are granting bail to persons in custody the following must be observed:

(1) "Land Taxes for Deed must be paid for currently i.e. for 1995."

Since the foregoing is only one of many examples of this weekend's incidents Sir, which undoubtedly seems to be a regular occurrence at this station, I crave your most kind indulgence in enlightening me as the validity, or rather, legality of this "Rule/Stance" since this negative attitude exhibited by the "Police" is not only disturbing and frustrates the Justices of the Peace in the performance of their duties, but also involves a colossal waste of valuable time, not to mention the utter frustration and the distress experienced by the persons being held in custody and to a lesser extent the bona fide bailors involved.

Less it be construed that my remarks are perceived as an assault on the entire Police Service, I wish to make it abundantly clear Sir, that in my view, whilst the vast majority of policemen are dedicated, hardworking people, there is that minuscule minority out there who are always bent on bringing the Police Service into disrepute, notwithstanding.

It might be instructive to note Sir, that before writing to you, I consulted with Mr John Griffith, the Senior Clerk of the Peace, Port-of-Spain Magistracy; Mr Andrew Booth: Ag. Senior Clerk of the Peace, San Fernando Magistracy; the Asst. Supt. of the Southern Division ASP Alexander and Inspector Farrell as well as ACP Cyriacus Liverpool, Head of the Division. Furthermore, I also held discussions with the Senior Magistrate Victoria and a judge of the Appeal Court who all concurred with me that the action of the Police was not only manifestly wrong, but also oppressive except for the Asst. Commissioner who stated that "he did not know and that he had to check."

In conclusion Sir, may I state that many and varied are the frustrations and difficulties encountered by those of us who are prepared to do the proper thing in the discharge of our duties, but our efforts are thwarted. This, especially more so, when upon the appearance of one of two particular JPs of this district, the very said rejected documents become sacrosanct and the affected parties are granted bail. Therefore, I must logically conclude that something is radically wrong somewhere in the administration of the system.

In the circumstances, and as a result of the foregoing, I am therefore appealing to you Sir for your most kind and prompt attention in this matter which I regard as one of national importance, and look forward to you for an expeditious reply. Thanking You.

I remain
Yours most respectfully
(Former Senator)
RALPH D. KHAN - J.P.
San Fernando

In concluding, I am impelled to state that Haji Ralph Khan's life has been a perfect example of triumph over adversity. In the numerous challenges which he has faced since his childhood to the present he has relied heavily on his spiritual and moral convictions, as well as his belief in justice for all. Relationships have been crucial to his success, and through his interaction with individuals, he has transcended barriers of race, class, gender and religion, in the process forging important links and creating a valuable human resource network. Even the opinions/ideas he raised during his tenure as a Senator are pertinent concerns to contemporary Trinidad and Tobago and, it is hoped that as he continues to do God's work through his social and charitable ventures, that his life will always remain a model for posterity.

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APPENDIX 1

EDUCATION VALUES AND RELIGION

By Professor Syed Ali Ashraf

Professor Syed Ali Ashraf proposed a faith-based framework of education for Trinidad and Tobago which he hoped government would integrate in its education policy, thereby saving the society from a rapid degeneration of values.

Basically his plan involved the following features:

- 1) The aim was/is to equip the growing youth with an inner understanding of the basic relations between knowledge and faith, knowledge and action, knowledge and power, knowledge and wealth, knowledge and national development, so that they may practise religion with an appreciation of its spiritual, moral and material significance, and act according to the religious criterion of conduct in individual, social, national and international spheres of their existence, and justify their practice in the context of man's relationship with God, Man and External Nature.
- 2) The teaching of literature should foster the refinement of the emotive urges of children and the youth through imaginative experience. Students should be able to apply morality to products of the imagination and to dis-criminate between correct and false emotive responses.
- 3) Natural Science and Mathematics should teach students not only logic, precision, the ability to analyze, generalize and conceptualize, but also an appreciation of the limitations of science and technology and its hypotheses. They should be able to weigh/balance the religious and scientific concepts of man, his existence and nature.
- 4) Society and culture should be learnt and taught in a manner which would reinforce in the minds of the youth, their sense of selfless service, a love for living in harmony with external nature and a resistance to ruthless selfishness as well as an ability to direct science and technology for the betterment of human relationships.
- 5) Students should grow up with an ever increasing knowledge and appreciation for history and philosophy of both eastern and western cultures and civilizations. They should be able to compare traditional, religious, and modern secularist concepts and approaches and their different consequences, as well as the loss of humanity, and increase in the mechanization of human personality.

6) The “sensate culture” promoted by the media debases and corrupts the youth/society. Authorities should devise rules/censorship of various forms of mass media/communication while simultaneously directing media authorities to produce suitable material for media education for schools which would not violate the basic moral laws which all religions uphold.

7) Religious Education courses should be developed and taught in all schools since the religious sensitivity of students will ensure their commitment to the values that are upheld by all religions and to which they should be emotionally attached. Courses should be provided for teachers in their teachers’ education degrees. Simultaneously, teachers of other subjects who are religious oriented and willing to undertake religious education classes should be provided with the special in-service training by competent individuals in this field. Given the above, a common core curriculum should be devised. Teachers should be trained to teach all subjects from a religious perspective without destroying the autonomy of each subject.

**THE JUSTICES OF THE PEACE
.....ASSOCIATION.....
OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO (JOPATT)**

24 Rushworth Street West, San Fernando, Trinidad West Indies Tel: 657-5088

4th. June, 1996

The Hon. Ramesh L. Maharaj
Attorney General of Trinidad & Tobago
24-28 Richmond Street
PORT OF SPAIN

Dear Honourable Minister,

Hoping you're fine and enjoying the best of PROVIDENCE, I greet you with our very best wishes. Further, on behalf of the Officers and members of the Justices of the Peace Association of Trinidad and Tobago, I take the opportunity through this medium to extend to you our heartiest congratulations on your excellent accomplishments and achievements for and on behalf of the peoples of Trinidad and Tobago as this country's Attorney General, more so, in such a short time.

Following our recent personal discussion, which I am certain you would recall, I now take the opportunity to forward for your attention the following written correspondence, the purpose of which, may I add, is two-fold:

1. To highlight problems generally encountered by members of the Justices of the Peace Association of Trinidad and Tobago in the performance of their Judicial Rights and functions, and
2. To make recommendations on behalf of the Association aimed at ameliorating some of these problems, which we hope, at the same time, would also serve to enhance the Role and Functions of Justices of the Peace in the overall administration of justice at different levels.

Firstly, we believe that it is not only essential, but imperative, that we bring to your attention some of the copious malpractices involved in the process of granting bail; the rampant collusion and corruption so deeply ensconced amongst "certain police officers" at various stations; well-known "professional bailors" who operate throughout the nation with apparent impunity; and as well, certain corrupt Justices of the Peace; who when combined together,

constitute a formidably negative and cancerous force threatening the very fabric of our society.

Regrettably, this corrupt band of individuals, all operate with one common aim and objective, an objective clearly and deliberately designed to pervert, and where possible, to even defeat the course of justice itself, merely for the sake of personal aggrandizement.

This they do, by unjustly fleecing and extorting vastly exorbitant sums of money from the unsuspecting public; people who unfortunately, in times of grief and sympathy; offer to stand bail for their loved ones; their near and dear ones; and close relatives or friends as the case may be.

Following are some notable examples of common corrupt practices:

1. The "police" at many stations throughout the country, and in numerous instances, in collusion with "professional bailors," have been for a long time now, arranging bail for accused persons held in their custody. **They do so by contacting a "J. P. OF THEIR OWN CHOICE" (their "own J.P. so to speak)** to do the needful, namely the granting of bail, and in the process, extracting huge sums of money mainly from close, poor, inarticulate relatives, who turn up "as bailors."

In such circumstances, these monies are then invariably shared/split among the partners involved. Suffice it to say, that people are fleeced of several thousands of dollars in almost every fell swoop by these vampires, even in cases where minor offences are committed, and even in some instances, where persons can even be granted their own bail.

For reliable evidence on the above happenings, you may refer either to the Senior Clerk of the Peace at the San Fernando Magistracy, or his Junior (Clerk of the Peace). By so doing, your investigations would inevitably reveal that despite the substantial number of Justices of the Peace representing the magisterial district of Victoria West, seventeen (17) to be exact, only two particular J. Ps. viz: (1) S..... A....., who does by far the vast majority of bails at the San Fernando Police Station, (a man who cannot even complete the relevant "Forms" (due to his state of illiteracy), and (2) R.....R..... who by design, do the rest. These are the only two J. Ps. summoned by the "Police" in San Fernando "to do bail" at this station, despite the close proximity to the station of other Justices of the Peace who reside in the area, or their availability. For further evidence on the above, you may also refer to the Probation Officers in San

Fernando who are willing to inform and advise, both privately and confidentially.

PLEASE NOTE SIR, THAT YOUR IMMEDIATE INTERVENTION AND AN URGENT INVESTIGATION ARE IMPERATIVES, IF WE ARE TO JOINTLY CLEAN UP THE RAMPANT CORRUPTION IN THE ABOVE AREA.

To further manipulate the above system wherever possible, particularly in the "San Fernando" Magisterial District (which has been brought to my attention), a new technique, a new scenario has evolved. Certain persons with bail fixed by the magistrate having failed to obtain same due to lack of proper surety etc., but who should be remanded in custody, are deliberately kept/detained (overtime) in the "CELL BLOCK" (under the Magistrates' Courts) whilst the "police" frantically attempt to secure "one of their own (professional) bailors to get the act going." Even the senior officers of the division are unaware of this practice.

Hence, in many instances, bail is granted in these "preferred cases" after normal working hours in collusion with "professional bailors" and "preferred Justices of the Peace" when the courts are closed, thereby rendering the Clerks of the Peace in such cases impotent. In these matters, the "police" plays the pivotal role. *May I repeat Sir, that in the event of an enquiry, private or otherwise, which is long overdue, competent people around the courts are prepared to come forward, to testify, I can assure you.*

2. **Here's another scenario which needs your urgent attention.** Certain Clerks of the Peace, e. g. the Clerk of the Peace currently attached to the Princes Town Court, (name can be supplied) very recently, in a minor matter involving a young first-time offender (17 years. old), fixed "Bail With Approval" in the sum of Ten Thousand dollars (\$10,000). He then despatched the youth to the San Fernando Police Station.

The Parent of the boy, unaware of the ramifications of **Bail With Approval**, journeyed to the San Fernando Police Station (from Princes Town) armed with a recently Registered Certified Copy of a Deed, along with her Land and Building Tax Receipt for 1996, hoping to secure bail for her son.

On getting to San Fernando, she requested my services as a Justice of the Peace (with jurisdiction in the district) to accompany her there, but upon arrival at the station, we were both advised that bail could not be granted since approval of the Clerk of the Peace in this instance was mandatory. Needless to say, this distraught mother became extremely dejected and almost collapsed there,

especially moreso, since in her view, she felt that she had fulfilled the criteria necessary to obtain bail for her son having provided the proper surety etc., and also, in view of the minor offence, as well as her son's clean record.

In other similar cases, it is common knowledge that certain "Clerks" engage in this nefarious practice so that a particular Justice of the Peace (with special connections to the Clerk of the Peace in question) would grant bail, guaranteeing in the circumstances, that the spoils can be shared between them both.

One is prompted to ask: Why therefore, in such a situation where proper surety was provided, should such a youth (with no court record, or rather a clean record) be despatched to the "Remand" in Port of Spain where he would be dumped; where he would inevitably have to mingle with real seasoned and hardened notorious criminals; and be exposed and initiated into; be it deliberately or otherwise; the true art and world of crime and violence?

Further, why should his parents have to endure *both financial and physical hardships in securing his release away in Port of Spain*, notwithstanding their trauma, anxiety, stress and restlessness? Was this precalculated and deliberate? Was this action legitimate? Again Sir, such events cry out for your urgent action.

3. Here's another common practice engaged in by the "police" at several stations throughout the country. On many occasions, when relatives of accused persons secure the services of honest hardworking Justices of the Peace who do not depend upon this "Office" for their livelihood (persons of unimpeachable character and well-known for their integrity who serve voluntarily) "to do the needful" by proceeding to the Police Station for the purpose of fixing/granting bail, the "police" almost invariably advises that "the papers are not ready." Not long afterwards, the very said police then secure the services of their "OWN J. P.," and bail is smoothly and conveniently facilitated/granted at their own leisure and pleasure. How long again are we to tolerate or to condone this practice?

At this point, I wish to emphatically state that this is not merely idle speculation, since personally, I have also been a victim of these unfortunate circumstances at the San Fernando Police Station on divers occasions at the hands of a particular Senior Officer whose name I am prepared to give. And though the above examples comprise a few of the multifarious problems encountered by the more upright Justices of the Peace who perform voluntarily, (or maybe for a token fee), when put together, they indeed form a veritable combination of harsh social negatives adversely impacting upon the society as a whole, since they all smack of wholesale rampant corruption.

4. We are certain that you are also aware Sir, as the law clearly states, that any individual elected to the position of Mayor of either a Borough or Municipality, or as Chairman of a Regional Corporation as the case may be, that person's appointment as a Justice of the Peace/Commissioner of Affidavits (Ex-Officio) by the President, becomes automatic (requiring only the taking of the oath as a mere formality).

Since however, the Law is virtually mute on what happens when such a person (persons) demits office, and such person has not re-applied for renewal of his/her warrant, then, under what conditions does one operate? And since a number of persons falling in this category are some of the main culprits, (some of whom you would know e. g. S..... A.....), some very pertinent questions do arise: Are the operations of such persons legitimate? Can they stand the scrutiny of the Courts in such situations, if made public? Your advice here is critical Sir, as you would observe. Furthermore, if such operations are illegal, and ultra vires, then our Association strongly recommends expeditious action in resolving what can indeed turn out to be a serious constitutional and legal debacle. It is worthwhile referring here to copy of letter to the Chief Justice as well as his reply in this regard, (both enclosed).

Mr. Attorney General, it is most instructive to note at this point, that over the past few decades, government/s in power have been progressively appointing a greater number of Justices of the Peace to represent various Magisterial Districts, presumably, in an effort to provide adequate quality service to the population. Notwithstanding this ingenuity however, which on the surface appears rather commendable, this initiative proved to have had a most disastrous effect, resulting in colossal corruption, since the vast majority of these appointments were made basically in return for political patronage (to and by government). The real purpose therefore, was accordingly, thoroughly defeated by the aforementioned concatenation of circumstances enumerated.

When combined with the incontrovertible fact that some of these appointees were totally illiterate, some semi-illiterate, while many others were of questionable character, this only served to exacerbate the confusion, the collusion and the corruption, so deeply entrenched in the system. Utter chaos thus resulted, and at this juncture therefore, NOTHING SHORT OF A COMMISSION OF ENQUIRY WE DARESAY, WOULD SUFFICE. An enquiry where aggrieved parties who have been "ripped off" of large fortunes by these con artists can come forward to give evidence, and maybe gain some redress at the same time, nothing else shall be able to stem this plague which has all but taken

**over the country. POSITIVE ACTION MUST DEFINITELY BE TAKEN,
AND TAKEN NOW, WE URGE YOU SIR! PLEASE!**

In view of the prevailing circumstances therefore, we wish, with utmost respect to you, as well as your office Sir, to urge you to withhold your proposed appointment of new Justices of the Peace (as discussed) in the interim, until some semblance of sanity can be restored among these corrupt and conniving collusionists. At the same time, we wish to take this opportunity to submit to you certain recommendations which we guarantee, would undoubtedly enhance the overall operations of the judicial and legal system in Trinidad and Tobago, an area which, on divers occasions, you have quite correctly reiterated, is in dire need of being overhauled, all for the benefit and the welfare of our entire citizenry.

In the circumstances, we wish to make the following recommendations:

1. (a) *As the Faculty of Social Sciences* That primarily, government, in collaboration with the University of the West Indies, institute a suitable training course for Justices of the Peace (possibly seventy five (75) contact hours during a twelve-week period) aimed at preparing them to function both creditably and honourably in their various roles.
 - (b) That at the end of such training which should be mandatory, both a written and an oral examination be conducted to measure their knowledge, with special emphasis on their Role and Functions.
 - (c) That successful candidates be then warranted/commissioned as Justices of the Peace. Unsuccessful candidates should also be afforded the opportunity to repeat the examinations once only.
 - under all the country.* (d) That the examinations referred heretofore in 1. (b) above should also be prescribed for current practising Justices of the Peace without any exception whatsoever. (This by itself, would eliminate a host of problems including corrupt practices).
2. (a) That with the escalation of the entrenched illegal operations of "professional bailors" who roam from district to district using the same "Deed" with impunity for the purpose of facilitating bail without being penalised in accordance with the BAIL ACT #18 of 1994, (despite being well-known by the "police" as well as certain J. Ps. and others), we propose that a comprehensive list of such persons be compiled by the competent authorities and circulated

- to all relevant government departments, and to our Association as well. Such lists should be conspicuously posted at every station.
- (b) That a special mechanism be instituted for endorsing a "deed" when used for the purpose of granting bail by means of a seal, or stamp etc., to indicate that a lien has been placed on such "deed" making it easily identifiable.
 - (c) That appropriate Identification Cards be provided by the A. G's. Office for members of the Justices of the Peace Association of T& T.
3. That the Attorney General's Department gives due recognition to the Justices of the Peace Association of Trinidad and Tobago (JOPATT), and that all matters pertaining to Justices of the Peace be referred to the Executive of the Association.
 4. That Circulars/Letters/Instructions issued by the Attorney General Commissioner of Police, Courts, Prisons, or any other relevant authority (particularly the Court and Process Branch of the Police Service) pertaining to the duties of and/or functions of Justices of the Peace, be copied to the Association for guidance, information, compliance and greater cohesion.
 5. That in consultation with the Association, suitably qualified Justices of the Peace be appointed Marriage Officers.
 6. That Justices of the Peace be appointed for a specific period (e. g. three to five (3 - 5) years in the first instance) as in the case of Notaries Public in the U. S. A., Canada etc., with the option of having their warrants renewed/revoked thereafter, based on their personal records.
 7. That where reliable evidence is available of Justices of the Peace committing or indulging in any unethical or immoral practice, more so, those enumerated in examples 1 to 4 above, (excluding our recommendations), we recommend unhesitatingly, that the warrants of such Justices be revoked. In this context, this Association pledges to bring to your immediate attention information relative to such violations.
 8. That government seriously considers our proposal making it compulsory for every Justice of the Peace in Trinidad and Tobago to become Registered Members of the Association, in

order to synchronise operations and training, and to assist as well, in eradicating the rampant corruption currently existing.

9. That government provides precise Maps and Circulars to the Association **clearly depicting the various boundaries and police stations in each specific Magisterial District** within Trinidad and Tobago. (Such provision would certainly eliminate petty misunderstandings which now occur in certain districts e. g. the Barrackpore Police Station).
10. That in view of the great disparity currently existing amongst Justices of the Peace relative to territorial jurisdiction (which incidentally lends itself to both confusion and corruption) e. g. some Justices now enjoy jurisdiction throughout Trinidad and Tobago, while others cover counties, and others yet have jurisdiction in particular Magisterial Districts comprising only parts of certain counties, the Association strongly recommends that some mechanism be introduced to give equity to all Justices in this respect. Either they all be assigned to the whole country, an entire county, or a particular Magisterial District as the case may be.
11. That the Association (JOPATT) be authorised to use the O.T. & T.G.S. stamp **for official business only.**
12. That a Complaints Authority be urgently set up to entertain complaints from aggrieved persons who have been aggrieved or "ripped off" by unscrupulous Justices of the Peace, "Police" and "Professional Bailors," and finally
13. That competent Justices of the Peace with the necessary academic and other suitable qualifications, upon consultation with the Association, be appointed Lay Magistrates vested with the responsibility and the authority to preside over, and to hear and determine certain Summary Offences e. g. petty theft, simple assault, obscene language, traffic offences for which tickets are issuable, remand cases, bar licences, and matters involving small claims under five thousand dollars (\$5,000.00), etc.

In conclusion, I wish to state that I shall be most eagerly awaiting your response, and would certainly be looking forward to meeting with you officially in the very near future with a small three-man delegation as agreed, where joint discussions can take place, hoping to resolve some of these critical issues.

Yours respectfully



HAJI RALPH D. KHAN
PUBLIC RELATIONS OFFICER

ccs: Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago
Chief Justice of Trinidad and Tobago
Chief Magistrate of Trinidad and Tobago
Justice James Davis - Police Complaints Authority
Minister of National Security
Chairman - Crime Commission
Director of Public Prosecutions
Deputy Director of Public Prosecutions
President - Law Association of Trinidad and Tobago
President - Southern Assembly of Lawyers
Media

THE JUSTICES OF THE PEACE

*****ASSOCIATION*****

OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO (JOPATT)

24 Rushworth Street West, San Fernando, Trinidad West Indies Tel: 657-5088, 652-2340

26th. June, 1996

The Hon. Ramesh L. Maharaj
Attorney General of Trinidad and Tobago
24-28 Richmond Street
PORT OF SPAIN

Dear Ramesh,

Hope you and your loved ones are fine and enjoying the best of PROVIDENCE.

I have enclosed herewith for your attention, a brief summary of a report of certain findings, consequential upon a survey conducted by the Justices of the Peace Association of Trinidad and Tobago (JOPATT), accompanied by a number of carefully considered recommendations for your consideration as well as for your implementation, reflecting a consensus of the vast majority of members of this Association.


We hope and trust, that this document, and the information it provides, would not only contribute handsomely to your current initiatives on law reform, but in addition, we are certain that it would undoubtedly serve to enhance the overall operations of the judicial and legal system in Trinidad and Tobago, which, as you have quite affirmatively reiterated on divers occasions, is in dire need of comprehensive review.

In conclusion, may I state, that it is the considered view of the entire membership of the Association that with your kind of drive and initiative, that we can not only anticipate, but rather, we do expect that expeditious action would be initiated by your good self no sooner than you have studied the document. Also, that you would be communicating with us in the very near future advising of our early joint meeting (with a small three-man delegation) as previously discussed.

Trusting that you would give this matter your most kind and prompt attention.

Kindly acknowledge receipt by signing and returning the attached copy of this letter.

Yours respectfully


HAJ RALPH D. KHAN
PUBLIC RELATIONS OFFICER

The Hon. Ramesh L. Maharaj
Attorney General of Trinidad and Tobago
Ministry of the Attorney General
24 - 28 Richmond Street
PORT OF SPAIN

Dear Mr. Minister,

On behalf of the Officers and members of the Justices of the Peace Association of Trinidad and Tobago, I wish to take the opportunity through this medium to let you know how much we appreciate the alacrity, and the thoroughness, with which both the government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, and yourself, as Minister in the Ministry of the Attorney General, have responded to the various concerns raised in our memorandum forwarded to you on the 1st. July, 1996, despite the magnitude of the issues involved.

Further, we wish to state that we are indeed gratified to see that most of, if not all of our recommendations and proposals submitted both to yourself, and by extension, to the Commission of Inquiry have been positively addressed. For this, we are indeed grateful since we feel assured that we have undoubtedly made a positive contribution, rather than indulging in an exercise in futility, this, not only in the interest of the country's Judicial and Legal system, but also to the benefit and welfare of the population as a whole.

In the circumstances, I wish to take the opportunity to commend the Prime Minister, Members of his Cabinet, and your good self as the Hon. Attorney General of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, as well as your dedicated team members for the urgency, the importance, and the significance which you have all placed on the affairs of Justices of the Peace in Trinidad and Tobago, with the special emphasis and your focus on ridding the system of its corrupt elements.

As you certainly are aware Sir, the vital role of the Justices of the Peace in the present legal and judicial system can never be overemphasized, since Justices of the Peace according to the Summary Offences Act, CH: 4: 20, and in concurrence with our common law, possess enormous powers. At the same time, since these powers carry with them a grave responsibility, and are tantamount to a sacred trust, duty and obligation, both to the State, and to the population as a whole, we the members of this Association recognise as Justices of the Peace that it is not only imperative, but paramount, that we display the most exemplary conduct in our dealings with the various entities with which we must inevitably interface and interact, whilst at the same time, exhibiting the highest quality of integrity and honesty which befits our noble calling.

Peace on the quantum of bail to be fixed. As you are certainly aware, I have had a very recent experience where the "Southern Division Police" persuaded me without success to set bail in the sum of \$100,000.00 in a certain matter, which led to the individual unfortunately being reincarcerated after having effectively and lawfully been granted bail, having been released from his cell, and having signed the Recognizance Form and all other relevant documents.

- 3) **Police dominance and hostility towards certain Justices of the Peace** chosen by family members or relatives of incarcerated persons, and given frivolous and vexatious reasons with the intent to discourage them from discharging their duties in favour of "preferred" Justices of the Peace.
- 4) **Proper accommodation for Justices of the Peace at Police Stations** when called upon to discharge their judicial role and functions. This is absolutely lacking, and is very embarrassing to Justices of the Peace in many instances.
- 5) That the question of appropriate remuneration to Justices of the Peace be addressed expeditiously, especially moreso, where Justices of the Peace are called upon to make numerous court appearances as witnesses of the State. Firstly, we propose that reasonable costs be paid (once again in support of our original proposals) at the end of a preliminary inquiry held at the level of the Magistrates' Court, and not as currently obtains, and secondly, that this be done immediately after determination of matter/matters, if and when they reach the High Court.
- 6) The Report of the Commission of Inquiry into Allegations of Corruption against Justices of the Peace recommended *inter alia* that a ceiling age of seventy (70) years be set for the termination of services for Justices of the Peace. In this regard, the Association strongly feels that rather than this being the main criterion for terminating one's services, the Review Committee set up by the Ministry of the attorney General should instead look into and consider the following criteria:
 - (a) The physical and mental state of the Justice of the Peace at that point.
 - (b) His honesty and integrity.

- (c) Whether he has performed creditably and honourably during his past term of office, and possibly even with distinction.
- (d) The tremendous wealth of experience gained along the way by senior JPs. operating over the years.
- (e) That as we are aware, some of our fellow JPs. currently head various recognised voluntary and social organisations with distinction, even many operating under the auspices of the government or in direct employment by the State..
- (f) That some of them currently hold, and may continue in the future, to hold prestigious positions on State Boards where the quality of contribution may be of an excellent quality and standard.
- (g) JP's continued involvement in social, community and welfare services with success should be significant in the assessment by the Interviewing/Review Committee.

We support the above criteria, especially in the light of the recommendation made in our memorandum submitted to the Attorney General by the Justices of the Peace Association of Trinidad and Tobago fully endorsed by the Commission of Inquiry that a fixed term of office of say 3 - 5 years be set for both currently serving as well as potential Justices in order that a review of their various portfolios may be conducted at this juncture, taking into account, the above factors.

Furthermore, in the proposed setting, where the Ministry of the Attorney General has instituted a standing Interview/Review Committee, this undertaking undoubtedly would prove not only to be feasible, but rather, to be both logical and reasonable in the continuing assessment exercise. We suggest in the circumstances, that this should be the considered rationale, and therefore, should form the main criteria in such cases, rather than just laying down the law where one's services must inevitably come to an end when he attains the age of seventy, thereby unwittingly ridding the system of the required expertise and prized experience of much needed personnel, many of whom may be of an exceedingly high calibre. Meritorious service therefore, combined with unimpeachable character, honesty and integrity should be paramount.

- (7) We repeat our call for a proper training programme for Justices of the Peace as recommended in our memorandum, this to be instituted by the State in collaboration with the University of the West Indies through the Faculty of Social Sciences. This is an absolute necessity, if certain Justices are not to be manipulated by the Police and other elements due to their

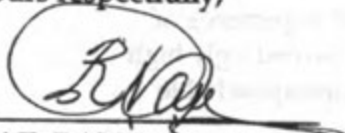
ignorance of the laws under which they function. A comprehensive programme of such a nature is a dire necessity and would serve to address several other shortcomings as well.

- (8) Last, but not least, the Executive of this Association feels greatly distressed by the fact that the composition of your Interview/Review Panel reflects a conspicuous lack of consideration for, and the total and complete absence of any representation or involvement by or from our Association, of which I am asked to remind you, especially having personally given us that assurance on the occasion of our "Installation Ceremony" which you attended at the Petrotrin Sports Club last April.

Mr. Attorney General, I wish to state that we have confidence in you, your team members, and the members of the Law Commission as well, and we wish to express our profound thanks, appreciation and gratitude for your keen personal interest, both in the functioning, and the welfare of all well-meaning Justices of Peace in the country, whose service under the present legal and judicial system, to say the least, is indispensable, not forgetting the overall interest and welfare of the nation as a whole which is of even greater importance. We wish to repeat therefore, that the tremendous attention and the appreciation exhibited regarding our memorandum forwarded to you by the Justices of the Peace Association of Trinidad and Tobago, would always be regarded with utmost admiration.

In conclusion, may I state that the Executive of this Association most eagerly anticipate that the aforementioned matters shall be dealt with expeditiously, and that they would be given the prompt and urgent attention, which indeed, they do deserve.

Yours respectfully,



HAJI RALPH D. KHAN
PRESIDENT - JOPATT

ORIGINAL PARLIAMENTARY CONTRIBUTIONS

834

National Agricultural Corporation Bill
[SEN. FURNESS-SMITH]

Tuesday, July 2, 1991

Agriculture, the city council, could all get together and make some practical decisions as to what to do about that problem to help farmers. It is as if farmers do not really matter. All the people I am talking about are all sitting in nice air-conditioned offices. The farmers do not matter. They have had the incredible stupidity to remain getting their hands dirty and sweating it out eight hours per day in the hot sun. All that should change.

Mr. President, I know the hon. Minister has his heart in the right place. I am absolutely convinced of that. But I would ask him to look again at this bill and see, really, whether the money which is going to be spent on this new statutory body could not be better spent in streamlining all these people who are pretending, at the moment, to be helping agriculture. There is not even a proper plant pathology laboratory. At Centeno you can get certain work done; they are very good and helpful, but they do not have the equipment. The university has the equipment. Some foreign people who were running a thing there, whether it was CARDI or some other group, gave up and left their equipment with the university, but the university has not got the money or the staff to run it. With all this enormous activity in agriculture and horticulture, when we get a little leaf mould, or a problem on the leaf of a plant, we have to send it to Miami. Instead of spending millions of dollars on all these people—extension officers, ADB, CMA, and so forth—let us have it all re-organized and find out what exactly the Government could do properly to help agriculture, and cut out the rest; cut it right out.

Thank you.

Sen. Haji Ralph Khan: Mr. President, I wish to take this opportunity to extend a warm and appreciative welcome to the Minister of Food Production and Marine Exploitation, since it is the first time, in my short tenure in this Senate, he has been privileged to present a bill here.

Notwithstanding however, the honourable intentions which this affable and industrious Minister may have, I feel it incumbent upon me to state at the very outset that I am really indeed somewhat disappointed with the provisions of this bill, since a cursory glance at its implications would clearly indicate that the more crucial areas of concern on matters relative to the development of agriculture on a more scientific and productive scale to satisfy our national needs, have either been hastily overlooked or possibly and probably deliberately side-stepped or precluded from this bill.

6.00 p.m.

This Government, during its tenure, has always strongly advocated, at least on paper, for the equitable distribution of the country's resources. I have absolutely no argument with that. But when taken against the back-drop of its forerunner, the Central Marketing Agency Act, Chap. 68:01, this bill, in my view, can possibly only succeed in achieving exactly the opposite to this Government's intended objective. To be more precise, with the passage of this bill in its present form, such a deeply contrasting scenario will only achieve the net result of making the rich richer, and the already poor, but willing, poorer indeed. A classic example is the poultry industry, but I shall deal with that in more detail at a later stage.

In like manner that our previous Prime Minister completely disregarded all developmental plans and programmes with gay abandon during his latter years in office, similarly, the presentation of this bill in its present state, when taken against the backdrop of the governing party's policy on agriculture, according to its manifesto, relegates the small planter, the small farmer and the small upcoming agriculturists, to a state of abject poverty and absolute oblivion. This bill would now spell eternal doom for them, in its present state.

The bill also seems to place special emphasis and accentuates the marketing aspect of agriculture which, to my mind, brings up some very fundamental areas of concern.

Firstly, since the area of marketing is a very specialized field which requires personnel with a certain degree of initiative, self-motivation, skill and the expertise in order to compete successfully with big business such as conglomerates, are our marketing strategies and capabilities compatible with those of the conglomerates with their highly specialized marketing enclaves which are specially oriented and designed to suit the needs of the clientele, both locally and internationally?

Secondly, in their minds, that is, the minds of the people in the administration, given the past experiences of the Central Marketing Agency and other pseudo-Governmental agencies, coupled with the general public service attitude pervading the society today, is this Government satisfied that such a scenario would adequately equip us to provide any meaningful measure of success in this area of stiff competition? Are we really satisfied, or is this an indirect relegation of responsibility by the state?

Thirdly, what shall we be marketing if there are no products to market, and no real incentives provided for production? Mass production is what we need if we can even think of self-sufficiency in agricultural food production, far less agricultural exports. How can this Government, may I ask, be so myopic then in re-drafting an agricultural policy, a policy so vital to our physical sustenance, and a policy so vital to the nation's economic well-being without placing greater emphasis in the areas of cultivation, increased production and husbandry? Since agriculture is not only vital to our personal, physical existence, but also second in line after oil, among our larger industries, as well as a prime earner of foreign exchange, it therefore stands to reason that a good agricultural policy can either make us or break us, moreso particularly in times of international crises involving our food import beneficiaries, as our past experiences have indicated to us.

I, therefore, make bold to state at this point that not only had the previous Government completely destroyed our agricultural policy, form of social welfare into the urban areas of this country, but this present Government has also been somewhat culpable, to some extent, displaying a greater measure of reluctance at times, as shown in the bill, to create an attractive atmosphere and the kind of environment that is necessary and conducive to the fostering, promotion and growth of agriculture to any worthwhile degree.

Now that Sen. Fyard Hosein has blown the lid on DEWD—with what is now known as LIDP—I am eagerly looking to better results from this Government. This small cadre of workers, to my mind, only touch the surface of the unemployment problem. I would have thought that in bringing such legislation before this Senate, greater emphasis would have been placed on the strategic areas of land-ownership, Government's policy on land-distribution, the purposes of leases and land allocation by Government, land-use, divestment, subsidies, acquisition, surveys and so on.

Policy on land distribution. To my knowledge, Mr. President, this Government has absolutely no national policy on the distribution of lands. Whatever decision is taken by Government on this broad spectrum, inclusive of leases, varies in objectives, duration, royalties and rentals, between and within various Government ministries, state enterprises and others, which we may choose to classify as pseudo-governmental agencies. Since there is no clearly defined criteria for the leasing of lands, it is precisely the lack of such programmes which fosters and promotes political patronage—that horrible monster which some accept as a

necessary evil. Herein lies the inherent problems of an environmental and ecological disaster and the continuing disgraceful problem of squatting. Quantitative analysis so necessary to serve either directional planning or for use in comparative social, welfare and economic studies, are not available.

6.10 p.m.

A study conducted by professionals and personnel involved in this area of activity has led to the conclusion that in light of the original intent, most of the land distribution programmes are failures, whereas others have been only marginally successful in relation to the inputs of labour and capital. Land capability in the past has been underestimated, causing many of the country's ecological problems. Hence there is every need for planners to match development with land capability side by side.

A classical example of such ecological problems can be sighted at the agricultural holdings and dairy farms located both at Carlsen Field and at Wallerfield respectfully, which are being over-exploited for land-quarrying capability rather than for housing, industrial and common usage for which these areas are now better suited.

Diametrically opposed to this development are the housing estates in areas like Diamond Vale and in Curepe along the Southern Main Road, especially south of the St. Augustine Nursery Station. In both these instances it has been found that some of the most productive and fertile lands in the country have been largely removed from agriculture. In this scenario, such lands are not only being used below inherent capacities, but have almost been ruined and rendered sterile, with the end result being that the production of much needed local food and fibre is being sacrificed by the low levels of husbandry by beneficiaries of state land distribution.

To substantiate my argument, I wish to quote from the report on the distribution of state lands for agricultural production of 1977 which states as follows:-

"It is obvious therefore, that in general a large proportion of the State lands distributed in the various countries is having very little impact on the current drive for increased food production."

Between then and now, the situation has further deteriorated. Land leased for quarrying is another example of land capability being ignored. While there have

been some immediate economic benefits, by and large most of the lands are now worse off.

In the absence of proper surveys, the lands have been ruthlessly stripped of the vegetation and the surface mined on a trial-and-error basis, leaving behind a very eerie looking unproductive and disfigured landscape, diverted water courses, altered surface and sub-surface drainage patterns, the pollution of streams and reservoirs, gaping hillside homes and shoreline destruction.

The derelict lands are aesthetically improvised. Many are littered with used plants and equipment, dilapidated structures and lubricant cans and drums. Many are now used as sites for refuse dump. The very characterless appearance has engendered a derelict mentality amongst our citizens.

As we all recognize, dereliction indeed breeds a wicked and brutish kind of insensibility bordering on a positive antagonism to the life and liveliness of the natural landscape it has supplanted. It debases as well as it displaces, what I will say, what is left of our civilization.

Housing estates: Many of the housing estates in this country portray very poor land use. In many instances, land which is suitable for agriculture have been permanently shifted for housing purposes. While shelter is provided, the land *per se* in many instances has not been used to foster the development of the whole personality. The sameness of the type of buildings, of the occupants and of the income and education level reflect a certain kind of dullness in this world and in this country particularly, which is so rich in variety. Sameness, the in-breeding of thoughts, ideas and concepts that demotivate and degenerate the level of aspiration.

Sen. Rampersad: Mr. President, I need to ask a question, please. I am failing to see the relevance of the contribution in the last 15 minutes with regards to the bill.

Mr. President: I was just about to ask the Senator whether he would need more than 10 minutes to conclude his contribution. If so, someone will have to move a procedural motion.

6.20 p.m.

Sen. Haji Khan: Most likely, I would be through by then. I may go over by two or three minutes possibly, I cannot say for sure. It is difficult to predict, but I will try my best to conclude my deliberation within the stipulated time.

Sameness the in-breeding of thoughts, ideas and concepts that demotivate and degenerate levels of aspirations. Do we need any further evidence than that which we already have in this community for me to prove this point?

I had alluded earlier on to the question of the poultry industry. A proper survey of this industry would obviously indicate that at present, we have in this country, approximately 100 medium-sized poultry farmers. With the passage of this bill, the size of these small entrepreneurs would not only diminish, but sooner or later, with the passage of time, they would have only been transient in this area of business, since their fate in the industry would have been completely sealed soon afterwards. The small businesses would now be swallowed up wholesale by large businesses with easy access to capital and would inevitably lead to continuing monopoly until the small man is completely wiped out.

To my mind, I do not believe that this is one of the objectives of this bill. I do not believe that this bill is intended to encourage or condone the take-over of small businesses by conglomerates or big business. Time alone will tell whether that is so or not. But in the Minister's reply, I would greatly appreciate if he could, at some stage, reply to the situation.

I would like to touch briefly on the Oropouche Lagoon. The vast expanse of land known as the Oropouche Lagoon, some years ago, was regarded as one of the main food baskets of the country. Since its destruction, however, by the previous Government, nothing really significant has been done to transform the area into its former glory. Under the Government of the People's National Movement, dredging works were haphazardly carried out to the Oropouche River, allowing salt water from the sea to flow inwards into the land, creating a very serious unnatural setback to this largely agricultural community for agricultural production, since it has been reduced to a mere trickle. The economy of this largely agriculturally oriented community, as a result, has been wrecked, if not eternally destroyed.

Since I am convinced that this honourable Minister is a keen proponent of agriculture and agricultural development, I would like him to state in his reply, the Government's present programme on the Oropouche Basin.

Caroni Limited: Caroni Limited has been a recurring decimal in the economic development of the country. This has attracted many commissions of enquiries and there has been, what is commonly known as the "rationalization of the sugar industry".

One of the important aspects which I would like to bring forward here is the question of land distribution, which I alluded to earlier on. Here is a situation where you have people who have grown up on the land; they have lived their lives on the land; they have built-up the agricultural industry of the country and these are the people who can make a positive contribution to agriculture and agricultural production in this country. But for some unknown reason, the lands are not being distributed to the people who have the know-how and expertise to cultivate the land.

Caroni Limited suffers acutely from poor, inept and inefficient management right from the top ranging from the Human Resource Department, down. I have been saying this for the benefit of the knowledge of those who may not know. Who needs further information, I can provide it for them when we are through. Management is either totally unaware or completely ignores the several forms of malpractices and the gross white collar crimes and corruption which exist there, with the Human Resource Department confirming temporary workers with relatively short stints of employment in preference to workers with longer service and proven ability, all because of either personal family connections or some other prejudices.

Matters like these need to be looked into for the viability of the company which is what we all have in mind for the benefit of the nation and country. When we are talking about the management structure of Caroni Limited, or any other company for that matter, but moreso with a company like Caroni that can be turned around; a company that has such potential with the growth and the vast human and physical resources—

Sen. Rampersad: Can I ask a question please?

Sen. Haji Khan: In the interest of time, do you not want to allow me to continue? You should realize, with all due respect, that my time is limited.

I was talking about the management structure of companies that lack efficient capable managers and I will give you an example—of which almost everyone of us in this Senate is aware—where there has been a complete turnaround because of that same management situation. We can take as that example the Co-operative Bank of Trinidad and Tobago Limited. It was a dying entity but because of the dynamism and the kind of management that was put into the business, today that

operation has been an entirely different story. It has become a great success story of the last couple of decades.

6.30 p.m.

I am not condemning this Government. I am trying to indicate certain deficiencies in the system so that the powers that be can address these problems so that the whole nation on the whole can benefit. Because of our economic problems, we can find employment and we can do so much more in order to improve the condition of our people.

I shall be closing in probably just a minute. Caroni has a redundancy policy. I believe that it is ludicrous even to think that positions which have been declared redundant, even relatively recently, when full benefits are being paid out to these persons, others have not only been appointed soon after, but quite shockingly, been confirmed in these positions, to say the least.

I therefore, recommend that this Government should set up forthwith, an independent commission of enquiry whether this commission of enquiry comprises a one-man team or many persons, but it must be an independent, impartial commission to enquire into the day-to-day operations of this company, with the objective of turning around the fortunes of this company, so that in time to come we would not have the need and the cause to be talking over and over about the problems of Caroni (1975) Limited.

Thank you very much.

Motion made and question proposed, That the Senate do now adjourn to Tuesday, July 9, 1991 at 1.30 p.m. [*Sen A. Tiwary*]

Question put and agreed to.

Senate adjourned accordingly.

Adjourned at 6.32 p.m.

SENATE

Wednesday, August 28, 1991

The Senate met at 1.30 a.m.

PRAYERS

[MR. PRESIDENT *in the Chair*]

DANGEROUS DRUGS BILL

[THIRD DAY]

Sen. Haji Ralph Khan: Mr. President, before moving on to my contribution on the debate before this Senate, I feel impelled to compliment this Government for the very keen spirit of compromise as exhibited in the handling of several bills presented to us here within recent times. It is my view that the Government, in a serious mood of compromise has even bent backward on occasions to accommodate several amendments proposed both by Independent Members of the Senate, as well as Members on our side. I feel therefore that this development should not go unnoticed and that this Government should be credited for such an open kind of disposition. Therefore, when we get to the committee stage of this bill which is before the Senate, I would anticipate exactly a similar type of compromise when amendments are proposed before the Senate.

Because of the deep-rooted disgust and deprecation which is held generally by the public of Trinidad and Tobago for this despicable trade which we know as drug trafficking, and which is traumatizing the entire society, the destructive and devastating effects of which seem to be growing daily; growing worse day by day, resulting in the production of several human derelicts, I regard it both as an opportunity and a privilege to be able to make a contribution on what I regard as a bill of paramount importance and tremendous magnitude, with very far-reaching consequences for this nation, especially *moreso*, since we indeed certainly recognize that within recent years the unprecedented spate of violent crimes, rape and kidnapping in this once tranquil nation of ours have not only become intolerable to our generally docile and peace-loving citizens, but for multifarious reasons have attained uncontrollable proportions and also many of these crimes are drug related as claimed by the competent authorities.

As a matter of fact, ever since my entry into this august Chamber, I have been looking forward with eager anticipation to the introduction of a bill of this kind in preference to even some of those which have come before, because of the gravity of the situation. In my view, the need for such a bill cannot be overemphasized since we must recognize that we live in a very degenerate and decadent society; a society which not only seems to have lost its sense of morality and direction, but the very soul of which seems to have disappeared into thin air.

Indiscipline and corruption have festered to the extent that they are now accepted as norms in the society by many, so much so, that as an example, even when a son of the soil who has spent many years abroad and who has developed a culture for hard work returns to this land in a managerial or supervisory capacity, and tries to enforce that type of practice, there are certain elements who gang up against him and they agitate for his dismissal. We have reached that stage of corruption, not only in the state of drugs, but our minds are being corrupt in all sorts of actions in our daily lives and our lifestyle in the country. It is pitiful to know that when such a person tries to enforce the syndrome of a fair day's work for a fair day's pay, then the elements gang up and agitate for his dismissal instead. Where are we heading?

3.20 p.m.

As parliamentarians, in addressing the problems that face this nation, it is paramount that we examine the socio-economic scenario in the particular setting. In so doing, what do we find? We find that the quest for material ascendancy amongst the citizens of this country is just overwhelming and that the "get rich quick at any cost" syndrome, as obtains currently, particularly among drug dealers and drug traffickers, has developed to such an extent that these drug demons—I do not call them drug barons, Mr. President; I regard the word "baron" as a decent word—are prepared to let no obstacle get in their way, be it either man or mammal and they are prepared to go to extremes even if it means the extermination of whatever obstacle comes in their way.

Unfortunately, the illegal use and abuse of dangerous drugs, drug trafficking and money laundering, are not only confined to this small society of ours, but their cancerous growth can be likened to a hydra-headed monster which is daily tightening its grip, tightening its tentacles mercilessly on the wider and larger international community. Consequently, this nation of ours should wake up from its deep slumber and strive to make every effort humanly possible to address the problems that confront us in our struggle to combat this plague.

At this stage, I want to reinforce the point of view expressed by our previous contributors. When I say our previous contributors, I refer to the Senators on our side. They have all expressed their support for this bill and it is sad to note that in certain quarters it has been misconstrued that some of us do not support this bill. I want to say that we support the bill unequivocally. Obviously though, as I have indicated, when we arrive at the committee stage, then we shall sit and meet and discuss where we shall compromise.

I wish to crave your kind indulgence in permitting me to read from an article which I wrote and which appeared in the *Trinidad Guardian* on Monday, October 10, 1988, titled "Innocent Travellers Paying for Evil of Drug Traffickers". In other words, it is a problem to which I have addressed my mind even before. I had an opportunity to address the situation that has presented itself to this Senate.

"As a prelude to this bit of correspondence, I wish to indicate that this letter which was written since June 20, 1988 was really intended for possible publication around that particular period, since your editorial on the following subject was published on June 18. However, the original contents are as follows; and for the benefit of your vast network of readers, I shall be grateful if you would kindly publish same, due to the most serious drug menace facing the country, especially during these very difficult times.

The drug-related incident involving one of our prominent local citizens, local beauty queen, Jackie Sanatan-McKenzie, recently sentenced to a 12-year term of imprisonment in a British jail for attempting to smuggle cocaine through London's Heathrow Airport, has impelled me to recall a most humiliating, infuriating and frustrating experience encountered some months ago at the hands of the immigration authorities at the Lester B. Pearson International Airport, in Toronto, Canada.

Before relating this experience, I wish, however, to digress, since I think it most appropriate to focus my attention to the subject contents of that editorial which I fully endorse and which, in my opinion, helps to amplify the gravity of the particular circumstances I am about to relate. I quote from the *Guardian's* Editorial of June 20, 1988:

"Worse still, she has done damage to her country abroad for having tried to smuggle cocaine from Trinidad.

She has not only hurt herself, but indirectly, all of us. When such incidents happen the Customs Officials of the affected countries tend to look on holders of Trinidad and Tobago passports with suspicion.

They pull us out of lines for strip searches. They detain our airplanes and search for illicit drugs.

Some of this has already been happening in Canada, where several nationals have been caught, or are on suspicion of dealing in cocaine.

We all know what has been happening with Air Jamaica planes in North America and it could well happen to us too."

Since the publication of this editorial, may I add, it is common knowledge, I believe, that our own national airline BWIA has been subjected to seizure and impounding by the North American authorities until very, very substantial fines imposed in circumstances have been paid at the expense of our taxpayers.

The foregoing information and sentiments in the editorial quoted above, in very straightforward, simple and explicit language are so very true. They are unchallengeable, and the free admonitions given here should be heeded at once, by all and sundry, by every citizen of this nation before it is too late.

And now for my personal experience. Precisely on September 14, 1987, several of my immediate relatives and myself, boarded the regular afternoon BWIA flight at Piarco International via Flight No. 604, for Canada, in an emergency situation, with my eldest sister lying critically ill at a Toronto medical nursing facility.

After a very smooth flight and on arriving at the Lester Pearson Airport, approximately at 11.00 p.m. on that day, we soon realized that several flights from other destinations had landed at approximately the same time, a matter which we hardly took notice of, having faced similar situations at other international airports on many previous occasions. So we fell in line with the other arriving passengers and headed to customs as usual which only took a few moments, and then to the immigration post.

Here is where our troubles and our frustrations began for myself and another brother of mine, since our other accompanying relatives, mainly females, were very smoothly and expeditiously cleared by the immigration authorities without a hitch.

As for myself and my brother, when our turn came, although we were in different queues, we were asked individually to step aside and have a seat in a waiting room.

Whilst the clock kept relentlessly ticking away at this late hour, we were growing more anxious to meet our Canadian resident relatives who had come to receive us. During this time, we were made to sit and wait, with no reasons being given by the immigration authorities for our detention.

3.30 p.m.

Immigration officers meanwhile, were both continuously and most expeditiously clearing other passengers who were being called in various categories, consisting of Canadian citizens, Canadian residents, immigrants and persons granted study permits and so on, from among those who were asked to wait in the same room. These comprised a large number of people.

Since no reason was given for our detention, an action which I considered to be very arbitrary, both my anger and my frustration began to mount increasingly to the point where I got enough courage and forthrightness to approach the first immigration officer in sight, with a view to sorting things out.

In my dialogue with her, and I made it crystal clear that the purpose of our visit was to see a critically ill sister, resident in Canada. Despite the fact that her location was very close to the airport, we were yet very far, since we had already spent double the time taken to drive up to her medical facility. It was a case of emergency on which we had travelled. Sensing that something was wrong, I also indicated to her that both myself and my bother had brought along only one small piece of luggage each and that she could exercise the right to search the both of us, physically, as well as our luggage, since we had absolutely nothing to conceal.

Here I reiterated once more the urgent nature of our visit—to visit my critically ill sister. She then retorted very tersely: “What are you saying, that I should see you now?”

In the circumstances, I humbly replied, “if you are prepared to do this for us, then we shall be most grateful.”

As a result of my approach, we were eventually interviewed and immediately went through immigration, but not until a full anxious 30 minutes or so had elapsed—30 full minutes of unsolicited tension and suspense. The crunch of the matter is, however, no sooner than we were met by our eagerly awaiting relatives and we made mention of our detention by the immigration authorities, we learnt from them of the most perturbing and disconcerting

news, that a record number of Trinidadians numbering 25 or so, including females, had been picked up by the Canadian police authorities, in one fell swoop, just around that same time, everyone, without exception, for drug-related offences, including possession and possession for the purpose of trafficking, and so on.

The lesson behind this all is, that despite being innocent citizens, yet we were made to endure some kind of punitive action for the crimes of our brother and sister Trinidadians, notwithstanding the fact that we were in the course of pursuing our own genuine business."

Dr. Basdeo: Would my honourable friend give way? Mr. President, this is certainly a most reprehensible and a most bizarre story and I would like to enquire from my distinguished colleague, whether he had brought this matter, when it occurred, to the attention of the relevant authorities in the Government of Trinidad and Tobago, in this particular instance, the Minister of External Affairs, and International Trade, or the relevant Minister at that time.

Sen. Khan: Mr. President, I did, not because I did not think that it may help in that direction. Probably I was wrong. I cannot say. But I made it public news so that the relevant authorities might have been able to take it up—to take up the gauntlet.

Dr. Basdeo: If you do not mind, can I elicit information as to whether in the information available through the media or through the Government at that time, the matter was taken up at all?

Sen. Khan: Mr. President, through you, not to my knowledge. I have not read this because of fancy, but several important factors emerged from this. We are dealing with several issues when we are dealing with a bill of a dangerous nature like this bill.

One of our colleagues on the "Opposition Benches"—which we are termed so often—brought up and emphasized the question of the swiftness of justice. That was endorsed by an Independent Senator and other contributors. So you see when our Trinidadian beauty queen was locked up at London's Heathrow Airport, justice was more than swift. There was expediency. She was dealt with immediately and there was no question of being incarcerated while pending trial for five or ten years and then have an abortion of justice because of the delay in the system.

Secondly, Mr. President, is the question of our international reputation being smeared when these things happen. You go through a lot of humiliation when you are strip-searched. Of course it is a degrading, a dehumanizing, a demoralizing, and a humiliating experience. Then we talk about the seizure and the impounding of our national airline aircraft. What are we talking about? These are very serious issues and we find as a result of these things, that citizens of Trinidad and Tobago are obviously discriminated against because of their involvement in the drug trade, whether so or not. So the innocent, as a result, has to be made to pay for the guilty. Mr. President, these are very serious consequences here. I did not read this article because I felt like reading it.

To back up this issue here and in relevance to the debate which is before the Senate, I also wish to crave your indulgence to read another article of mine because it is in consonance with the bill before the House. This time I call for the title of the bill which appears here in a publication of the *Trinidad Guardian* of Thursday, February 16, 1989 and is titled "Time for a Gun Court in Trinidad and Tobago."

3 40 p.m.

As I mentioned in my preamble about a spate of violent crimes and kidnapping and a series of criminal elements and situations that exist in the country, and these are things that I recommended at the time. With your indulgence, I want to read parts of this, if possible:

"As I continue to monitor in the media the regularity with which offences of a criminal nature; namely, robbery, rape, violence, and ruthless killings are being perpetrated mainly upon hardworking and law-abiding citizens of Trinidad and Tobago, all the more I am convinced that the Government should implement expeditiously something like the 'gun court system'. This system was introduced by the Jamaican authorities some years ago when the use of firearms in crime and killings reached unbearable proportions."

Despite other matters of urgency with which the Government of Trinidad and Tobago might be currently faced, this is one area that should top their priority listing. Since the traumatic experiences suffered by numerous families at the hands of criminals in this once peaceful land, the fear and trepidation which virtually envelop the lives of so many of our business people, their employees, innocent housewives and children in their own homes, many people seem to have given up hope and are bent on immigration at any cost. It is time for concerted

action not only by our present Minister of National Security, but by our lawmakers in both Houses of Parliament.

I can recall some years ago, one of our eminent jurists and now retired Chief Justice, Sir Isaac Hyatali, had publicly appealed for sweeping changes to some of our laws, recommending, *inter alia*, confiscation by the state of individuals' property or income gained through drug-related activities, gains which should not be substantiated legitimately. He even, quite rightly, in my opinion, went so far as to suggest the imposition of life imprisonment in certain circumstances involving drug dealers. But his call was completely ignored by the powers that be. What a real pity! For today, we seem to be paying the price. Again, some time later, and fairly repeatedly after his initial appeal, our present Chief Justice, Clinton Bernard, strongly advocated law reform in several areas, particularly relative to

and non-bailable offences for certain categories of criminals and crimes. But after a loud, hue and cry by a minuscule minority, once again such a serious matter continues to drag along over the years; or possibly has been confined to the flames by those in authority to effect change.

The time has now come to ask precisely, where is this nation heading with its continuous escalation of almost every imaginable type of crime and violence? To go back momentarily to the proposed system, this should be implemented in such a way as to provide for speedy trial and the administering of the appropriate kind of penalty on those found guilty, a penalty that would also act as a deterrent. All offences falling under this system should be non-bailable with the right of appeal to a special body appointed specifically for this purpose. Other systems of this kind, as well as that of Jamaica, can be studied in detail and the changes made, if necessary, by a special panel of our top jurists. But this must be done without any delay whatsoever in the process.

"As we delve further into some of the types of crimes which are becoming more commonplace, one that strikes me immediately is the most recent case of the slaying of Gerald Stone."

That was a very brutal slaying at the time. That was an incident that really motivated me, among others, to write this letter.

"Moments before his death, he had been returning to his normal routine, having withdrawn a reportedly substantial sum of money from a Port-of-Spain bank. Personally, I do not categorize this as a strange or rather unexpected sort of happening, that is, not as far as the individual is concerned; but the type of

crime in itself I wish to reiterate. Before my readers begin to anticipate however, what I really mean by this statement, let us look at the all-round scenario in its ready-made conditions which exist in the country for this type of crime.

Since the departure of our colonial rulers from these shores, we have been experiencing a general breakdown in discipline in almost every sector of the population. Like it or not, this is a fact which I state without prejudice. Such a situation, however, has been greatly exacerbated by the chaotic situation with pavement vendors that have developed in our cities and other urban areas. And up to this day, people, genuine shoppers, workers and even tourists can hardly walk the streets and go about their business peacefully and unmolested."

"In addition, the exercise of moneys being checked and double-checked at banks for withdrawal purposes can also be easily and clearly seen by criminally-minded persons through the plate glass of every bank, more or less. I wish to state that until and unless appropriate laws relative to loitering, blocking the free passageway, illegal sidewalk vending, and so on, are properly enforced, conditions would exist in which innocent citizens would easily become the prey by those who set out to live by acts of banditry and lawlessness. This cannot and should not be tolerated any longer.

Consequently, I wish to advise the authorities in my humble capacity as an ordinary citizen, even though it may seem a voice crying from the wilderness, clear the sidewalks now! Although these suggestions may not completely eliminate the risks which Gerard Stone unfortunately had to face before his death, such measures, if implemented, would undoubtedly help to minimize the risks. For despite the laws having been well laid down in the statutes, we are woefully lacking in the area of satisfactory enforcement by the agencies responsible for enforcing those laws".

Mr. President, the rationale and the logistics behind my reading of this article are self-explanatory, but I think I shall reiterate one or two of the points, again, because of what has been mentioned here, and the contributions that have been made by other speakers who emphasized certain areas of the bill, the need for us to do certain things in the consideration of the bill.

I wish to refer, again, to the woefully lacking area of satisfactory enforcement of the law. You see, when our prominent jurist here, Ramesh Lawrence Maharaj,

made certain points, he was personally attacked in one or two instances, and I do not think that was necessary. I also believe that his statements were misconstrued, because when he mentioned, among other things, about setting up a commission of inquiry, he meant, and he stated, that the bill should be passed. He did not intend that the bill should be held back. He did not imply that the bill should be held back, because he is for the bill. He asked that a commission of inquiry should be immediately set up to report on steps which may be taken in the interim, to halt and possibly reverse any further deterioration in this regard, and in order to properly implement this bill. So, you see, the big hullabaloo about that is a question of a misconception and a misapprehension.

However, I shall proceed in another direction. I think I have said quite a bit as far as the dangers of certain elements are concerned, and I will now go into another area. I think it is very important that we deal with some of the real dangers of this bill, which are some of the dangerous drugs. In dealing with some of these various drugs, I think one that has not been given any sort of prominence by previous speakers is alcohol. In my view, and from scientific data which have been collated by world-renowned authorities and authors, it has proven to be one of the most dangerous and lethal drugs that exist in this part of the world, and a licensed one at that.

Before delving into any specific details about the uses and effects of any of these, Mr. President, I would like to give a definition of what is an intoxicant, because in dealing with drugs of any kind, it has a somewhat intoxicating effect. The medical dictionary describes an intoxicant as, "a drink or a drug that can produce a pathological state of the mind by being toxic to the central nervous system". In dealing with some of the various kinds of mind-bending drugs, I wish to begin with the number-one killer, which is alcohol. I shall deal with the drug alcohol very comprehensively.

This is oft times overlooked, since it is a licensed drug, but alcohol is the most dangerous drug on earth, a drug that can, unfortunately, be taken legally in most countries of the world without fear of police harassment. Alcohol users feel secure because they believe they are using the safe, legal drug. Alcohol is the cause of more serious deaths than all the other drugs combined; namely, cocaine, marijuana, heroin, and others.

In alcoholism, memory disintegrates. Alcohol is a well-known thief. It takes away cash from families, childhood happiness from abused children, chastity from young women, reasoning from the educated, productivity from the working class, and years of life from the alcoholic.

[SEN. KHAN]

Dr. Charles Richet, of Paris, Nobel Prize winner in physiology says:

"Alcohol soon overcomes the strongest man and turns him into a raging beast, who with empurpled face and bloodshot eyes, bellows forth oaths and threats against his surroundings and insults imaginary enemies. Never in animal species, not among pigs, nor jackals, nor donkeys is such ignominy to be found. The ugliest thing in creation is a drunkard, a repulsive being, the sight of whom makes one ashamed to belong to the same living species."

Per capita consumption is a good indicator of the level of alcohol-related problems in a country. Reference R.G. Smart—*World Health Forum*; Volume 12 page 99 to 103, (1991):

"World commercial production of alcohol increased by 50 per cent between 1965 and 1980".

B. Walsh and M. Grant, "The alcohol trade and its effects on public health". *World Health Forum*, Volume 6, pages 195 to 199 of 1985:

"Heavy consumption of alcoholic beverages (above 15 litres per adult), is mainly a feature of certain western and southern European countries, while in North America, the remainder of Europe, Australia, and New Zealand, the levels are also comparatively high. (10 to 15 litres of pure alcohol per adult, each year)."

World Health Organization Technical Report Series, Number 650, "Problems Related To Alcohol Consumption", page 34 of 1980:

In a Third-World country like Trinidad and Tobago, in 1986, 20.2 million litres of beer, 3.4 million litres of stout—malt beer, that is—and 10.3 million litres of rum were produced for local consumption alone, for a population of approximately one million. That is Pan-American Health Organization Report, Scientific Publication Number 522, pages 192 to 193, of 1990.

The United Nations Demographic Yearbooks for Population Estimates, 1968 to 1970, give the following countries: Yugoslavia, 10.7; German Democratic Republic, 7.8; Poland, 7.4; Sweden, 7.3; Netherlands, 7.3; Trinidad and Tobago, 7; Finland, 5.8; Cuba, 2.9; Turkey, 0.7. But in 1990, Finland had the greatest consumption of alcohol per head in the world. Five million Finns consumed 250 million litres of alcohol in that year. Alcohol gives seven calories per gramme. One teaspoonful of alcohol equals two teaspoonfuls of sugar in terms of energy—I do not know if Sen. Dr. Martin Sampath wants to query any of my

information—a fifth of a bottle of whiskey will give more than our 2,200 Kcals., which is more than our total energy requirements—

Sen. Dr. Sampath: Thank you for giving way. Seeing that my name has been called, I wish to state categorically that I prefer sugar to alcohol any day.

Sen. Khan: No offence meant, Mr. President, I was just pulling his legs as a very good friend.

A fifth of a bottle of whiskey will give more than 2,200 Kcals., which is more than our total energy requirements when the body is at rest. Hence even if we do not eat our food containing proteins, carbohydrates, fats, vitamins and minerals, we can still get all our energy requirements from alcohol alone, at the expense, however, of severe deficiencies of proteins, vitamins, minerals, *et cetera*. Alcohol is not a stimulant. It only provides calories and dulls the consciousness of fatigue. Many people are not aware of these facts.

In Government hospitals, Mr. President, one out of every two patients occupies a bed because of alcohol-related problems, while, on the street, one out of every five persons has problems because either he drinks or because someone else drinks. Accidents at work, and the home and during sporting events are more frequently related to alcohol consumption than is widely recognized. These are facts which we do not really recognize; we brush them aside too easily. The death rate, Mr. President, for non-alcoholics—this is fantastic news—is 250 per cent less than those expected for alcoholics.

Alcohol is estimated to be responsible for 28,000 deaths per year in the United Kingdom. These statistics are taken from the *British Medical Journal*, Volume 302, titled, "Warning: Alcohol Can Damage Your Health", page 679, dated March 23, 1991. So these statistics which I am providing are not spurious, Mr. President.

Alcohol is involved in three out of every four cases of homicides; two out of every three cases of unsuccessful suicide attempts; one out of every three cases of successful suicides; one in two cases of rape, including incest; three out of four cases of robbery with violence; one in two cases of family quarrels and brawls; also, in many cases of child abuse, divorce, head injuries, *et cetera*. LJ West Edition, "Alcohol and Related Problems", the American Assembly, Columbia University, Prentice Hall Incorporated, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1984. A-class statistics, indubitable.

Alcohol and gasoline, Mr. President, is a more deadly mixture than most of us recognize.

Mr. President: Sorry to interrupt your intoxicating address, but your speaking time has expired.

Motion made, That the hon. Senator's speaking time be extended by 15 minutes. [*Sen. J. Spence*]

Question put and agreed to.

Sen. Khan: Alcohol and gasoline is a deadly mixture. A car in the hands of a drunken driver is as deadly as a revolver in the hands of a killer. Death due to traffic accidents is the single largest health hazard of the youth. Approximately 75 per cent of the car drivers have been drinking before the accident. In them, the vehicular accidents are due to the delay in reaction time, slower reflexes, and loss of judgment. Safety of others may depend on one or two persons in control, and hence, the following jobs demand extra care and sobriety, for example: Bus operators, airline pilots, taxi drivers, surgeons on call—in fact, all doctors at all times whether on duty or not, fire fighters, police, babysitters. These are only a few to mention. Commercial airlines forbid alcohol or the use of alcohol by pilots within eight hours of flight time.

For the benefit of this Senate, I would like to discuss a few hints as to where and how alcoholism begins and how it is perpetuated throughout life. One, alcoholism may begin in the womb for no fault of the foetus. The mother drinks the alcohol and the poor unborn child in the womb gets the first taste of it. The baby may be born suffering from the withdrawal effects of alcohol, Foetal Alcohol Syndrome, or may be born with congenital abnormalities. Two, the child grows up. With the first attack of fever or influenza, the parents give the child a shot of brandy. Three, the child comes home from school and watches television and what does the child see? He sees alcoholic beverages outnumbering other beverages; he sees young characters eager to start drinking; he sees older people resembling his parents, teachers, and elders who grab the bottle before it is served. He watches a sporting programme, for example, car rallies, football, *et cetera*, and he finds that alcohol is heavily advertised on the walls, on clothing, with brand names and attractive logos. He begins to associate excellent performance in sports with the use of alcohol. The message to the public on the television media in many instances, therefore, portrays that drinking alcohol could make them

glamorous, sexually desirable, socially acceptable, with a prominent status in society.

Legislation, therefore, should be introduced—and I direct this remark to the hon. Sen. Broomes on the committees that we set up—enforcing radical changes in the advertising format necessary for the telecommunications media. He finds that every film or commercial shows alcohol as a way to face a crisis; he finds every hero on the screen drinks alcohol to project his macho image.

At home, when parents drink alcohol, as well as serve alcoholic drinks to the guests, the children once again are exposed to this influence and they grow up with double standards. Double standards exist not only in the home, but also in the country, and at the individual level. Some of our own medical doctors—and not

my good friend, again—drink again and again when attending one update after another. Then they lecture to the patients and to the public about the dangers of alcohol and smoking. How ironic is it! They do the same where smoking is involved, chain smoking, some of them do—that is generally speaking. Of course, there are exceptions.

Even when our youths go to sports clubs, alcohol is abundantly available as well as being advertised on the walls. When thirsty, they are encouraged to take a glass of cold beer. As an adult, to close a business deal, he drinks alcohol himself and gives it to the potential customer—"let us go to lunch". That is the norm to close the deal.

The company of friends who drink alcohol is also a strong influential factor in causing one to become an alcoholic. The daily worker squanders his wages at the corner bar on his way home after the day's work, where the day's pay may be frittered away on alcohol the same evening.

Finally, the time comes that such a person takes alcohol as a mere nightcap, or as an escape valve from some little anxiety and frustration when this man, now already a father or a grandfather, goes in search of his old friend in the bottle.

Subservience to alcohol-containing drinks becomes the hallmark of this alcoholic. He would gulp drinks before going to a party to be sure of getting enough; he wants to prime up. Finally, he may join the Alcoholics Anonymous. Or if he loses his house and his job, he may take to the streets as one of the homeless alcoholics.

Now, we talk about the action of alcohol on the body, what does it do? Mr. President, I would like to elucidate on this point with the few minutes left before I close. Alcohol is primarily a depressant of the central nervous system and hence should be classified as a mind-altering drug. It slows the brainwave in the electroencephalogram. One may argue that alcohol is a stimulant and not a depressant because a person starts to move and walk faster immediately upon taking an alcoholic drink. I am explaining now that this is because of its depressing effect, and not because of its stimulating effect.

Alcohol depresses the inhibitory centres of the brain. The last of what we have learnt as our finer qualities are the first to be depressed, and what are they, judgment, social limitations, shyness, talking only when necessary, self-control. These are the qualities that distinguish a human being from the lower animals, and these qualities are the first to be depressed, and hence the person who drinks alcohol reverts to more primitive behaviour, becomes garrulous; judgment is impaired, thereby causing car and other accidents, unjustifiable behaviour, and wrong decisions. God alone knows how many wrong decisions have been made by kings and by presidents, by rulers of governments because of suppression while under the influence of alcohol.

So you see, alcohol does not stimulate sexual desire, as some people think, but because of suppression of inhibitions, it causes more reluctant females to become agreeable to immoral actions. These are things that we must address and we must know about these things. Alcohol at first depresses the higher brain centres called the neo-cortex, which is the new brain found in human beings which controls judgment and other learned inhibitions. Hence, the person may become garrulous and anti-social. The association cortex which associates sensory information and relays it to the motor areas is very large in the human being, and this association cortex clearly sets humans apart from the lower animals. Our intellect, personality, and the capacity for speech, all derive partly from the function of this association cortex.

As drinking continues, the deeper and more primitive areas of the brain are depressed, leading to loss of motor co-ordination in the musculoskeletal system of speech and of vision. When more alcohol is consumed, the respiratory and cardiac centres in the medulla are depressed and the person becomes comatose. The lethal dose of alcohol is around 0.5 per cent. One or two drinks affect reasoning, memory and caution; while three or four drinks affect judgment and self-control;

five or six drinks affect co-ordination; seven or eight drinks cause imbalance; and 10 or more drinks affect the vital senses in the medulla causing coma.

4.10 p.m.

Legal intoxication is a blood alcohol level of 0.15 per cent, as a result of approximately five drinks, causing slurred speech, blurred vision and impaired physical control. For each one-hour time lapse, blood alcohol concentration falls by 0.15 per cent or approximately one drink. This is taken from D. A. Girdana & D. Dusek Editions "Drug Education" Third Edition, Asdidon-Wesley Publishing Company, Massachusettes. Pages 55—89 (1980).

With continued use, alcohol produces disease in virtually each and every organ of the body, for example, liver, heart, brain, pancreas, sex glands, immune systems, and so forth.

Mr. President, with the time left at my disposal, I would like to make just a few recommendations. Some of us in this Senate may find that I am an unreasonable individual, but be that as it may, reason and logic prevails amongst the majority. I wish to recommend the following:

1. That Government agencies, the private sector and the voluntary organizations must all put forth combined efforts in campaigning against alcohol.
2. Encourage development of coffee and teashops, soft drink industry, sporting programmes and other places that can provide alternative to drinking alcohol. For example, the establishment of community centres in various districts.

Experimentation begins with tobacco and alcohol, the age for tobacco being 11 years and for alcohol, 12 years. Tobacco should be prohibited in schools. There is a law for that right now, but the use of tobacco in schools is very rampant. Tobacco is a gateway drug to alcohol, marijuana and other drugs.

3. Make it difficult for the average person to indulge in alcohol by:
 - (a) increasing the price of alcoholic beverages to unaffordable levels. The number of traffic accidents decreases proportionately with the increase in the price of alcoholic beverages. Banning alcohol in the advertising media, press, radio, sporting events, and the TV. Some countries such as, Egypt and Cuba have banned all public advertising of alcohol.

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- (c) Putting warning labels, in bold letters, on the bottle that alcohol is extremely dangerous and that both "Buyers and Sellers should Beware".
- 4. Ending all tax deductions for advertisements on alcohol and in addition impose a 10 per cent levy on alcohol advertising, the proceeds of which should be spent on health education.

The alcohol manufacturing companies always threaten us that tax increase will cause high unemployment due to retrenchment. Do you believe there is any truth in what they say? Of course not. Employment reductions in the alcoholic beverage

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industry would result in increase in employment elsewhere in other sectors of the nation's economy, because the amount of dollars in circulation in the country will remain constant and, indeed, may increase. Of course, the people out of jobs would be the directors of the alcoholic beverage companies, and not the working masses.

- 5. Leaders in every discipline and in every community shall set an example to the juniors by themselves refraining from alcohol. Doctors and pharmacists can play a leading role.

Mr. President, because of the serious nature of this bill, much has been said on different aspects of it and I am convinced that all hon. Senators fully recognize the dangerous consequences of the use of dangerous drugs, trafficking, and all other relative areas.

In closing, I wish to reiterate, that with the obvious compromises that we expect from the Government side when the committee meets to consider the amendments, we shall be giving our unequivocal support to the bill, generally.

Thank you very much, Mr. President.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Sen. Alloy Lequay: Mr. President, before we do Government Business, perhaps, we should take the resolution on page 6.

Question put and agreed to.

SPECIAL OLYMPICS CORPORATION (INC'N) BILL

Adoption

Sen. Leonard Bradshaw: Mr. President, this is a report of the Special Select Committee of the Senate appointed to consider and report on a private bill entitled an Act for the incorporation of the Trinidad and Tobago Special Olympics Corporation and matters incidental thereto.

Your committee comprising Sen. Neil Bhagan, Sen. Salisha Baksh, Sen. Louise Horne and myself was appointed on Tuesday, April 30, 1991. Our committee held one meeting on Tuesday, June 11, 1991. Your committee examined the promoters representing the organization and from the oral evidence taken, your committee was satisfied as to the facts and allegations presented, and any doubts held by your committee were dispensed.

I beg to move that the report be accepted by the Senate subject to amendments listed in the Appendix.

Question proposed.

Question put and agreed to.

Report adopted.

Question put and agreed to. That the bill be now read the third time.

Bill accordingly read the third time and passed.

NATIONAL TRUST BILL.

[SECOND DAY]

Order read for resuming adjourned debate on question (June 11, 1990).

That the bill be now read a second time.

Question again proposed.

Sen. Haji Ralph Khan: Mr. President, I wish to preface my remarks by stating that a bill of this kind cries out for support; not only the support of a few

parliamentarians who sit here to enact laws, but moreso, for a much more comprehensive and unanimously, acceptable kind of commitment and support by every living creature in this country. In a situation like this, a fully nationalistic and a "universal" type of support and approach is not only essential, but rather absolutely imperative, if we are to anticipate even the semblance of success of such a wonderful concept and plan.

Notwithstanding the honourable intentions of the bill and its protagonists, the noble and lofty ideals, the worthy principles which it represents, however, one might be quite apt to think, and maybe possibly quite rightly so, and to presume and probably also to safely conclude, that the timing of this bill is inopportune. For when taken in the context of a continuous neglect, erosion, rape and wanton physical destruction of our rich, effervescent and historical heritage, not to mention the damage and destruction wrought by the agents of denudation with particular reference to the post-independence era which, despite the abundant and overflowing wealth of this country during the specific period during this era, introduction of this bill now, can quite realistically be categorized as an anti-climax. In other words, this situation is akin to a most classic example of locking the gates to the stable only after the horses have bolted out. In the prevailing circumstances, however, like it or not, one can only be encouraged to adopt the slogan "better late than never".

2.05 p.m.

As a citizen who has endured both the rise and fall of this nation in its many adversities and diversities, to say the least, this bill, on the one hand for multifarious personal reasons, quite naturally arouses my innermost interests. Yet on the other hand, with the persistent and consistent erosion of the moral and ethical standards of the peoples of this blessed land—some of which at times even appear to be orchestrated by larger influential groups representing varying interests—gnawing away at the very basic, economic and social fabrics of our society, this repulsive attitude creates in my mind a very deep-rooted fear, an aura of trepidation and pessimism and a kind of suspicion that prompts me to ask the following questions: Can the objectives of such a wonderful bill be realized by legislation? If not, then what? Can we in this or any other forum in the land legislate in order to regulate the characteristics of human behaviour? Can legislation regulate the degree of one's commitment to patriotism and nationalism? Bearing these factors in mind, therefore, I ask, can this bill then be effectively

passed so that the intentions of the bill would serve the purposes for which it was legislated?

Whenever we have to deal with legislation of this type, irrespective of the side of the House from which it emanates, the aforementioned are invariably some of the salient and the more pertinent questions and issues which without doubt must be addressed, and addressed without prejudice to anyone. Most of us fully recognize that whether we like it or not, governments would come and governments would go. But as a citizen of this country and as a born Southerner, in particular, generally speaking, one who has for many decades witnessed the dire contempt with which South and Southerners have been treated by previous Governments in the past, despite the fact that the bulk of the revenue of this country is derived from the South from various sources, this to me is a matter of deep concern.

In the interest of time however, I shall, in my contribution, confine my comments to all the places of interest, particularly in the southern districts, mainly because of that particular reason and because of the neglect which I have seen over the years. This I say without any prejudice and I shall try in my contribution to accentuate these areas in order that we might be able to preserve, restore and protect some of the south-based places of interest, the scenes of interest with their own marks of historical significance and the national heritage which quite obviously would fall under the administration and the control of the National Trust if my recommendations are given the credibility which, to my mind, they so very well deserve, whether it is now or in the future.

Following are some of the outstanding historical areas of our national heritage which I wish to advocate should be addressed by this Government. Bearing in mind Mr. President, our depleted economic and physical resources, I recommend the different types of approaches to different areas in the restoration of these places of interest. As I go along, I shall enumerate them one by one.

Firstly, I shall deal with the Palmiste Estate. The Palmiste Estate which is well-known to all of us, has a history that takes us back to the period of the famous Cedula of Population which was an agreement between the last Spanish Governor, Chacon and a French planter from Martinique named Rose de St. Laurent. Others came from France after the French revolution; yet others came from Haiti after the Haitian revolution of 1791.

The British conquest of 1797 then brought a new phase. It witnessed the arrival of the Lamonts, who were largely responsible for the fame that the present holds in history and folklore. They were from Scotland. The estate under which Sir Norman Lamont experimented, consisted of sugar, coconuts, coffee, cassava, ground provisions, mahogany and rubber. Sir Norman Lamont, who was a man of great foresight and a man with an implacable interest in tropical agriculture, was involved in several kinds of joint experiments with the Imperial College of Tropical Agriculture which today, is now known as the Faculty of Agriculture of the University of the West Indies. Upon his demise, Sir Norman Lamont left his entire estate to the then colonial government so that they could arrange for its use in the promotion of tropical agriculture in the island. The colonial government showed no interest whatever in the offer and so it was passed on to new owners.

The Palmiste pasture consists of 40 acres and is a part of the rich heritage involving experiments with a history of three generations of Scottish aristocracy, slave labour and indentured Indians for whom the "barrack system" formed an integral characteristic of their very existence. This pasture could be converted into a natural park, having a rich history of sports and culture, for this is where the cricket field saw the emergence of players such as the famous Sonny Ramadhin, or the famous Spin Twins, Learie Constantine, Oscar Roach, Sonny Beekhee, "Shortie", Samaroo and many others. [Interruption] I believe there is absolutely no relationship there.

2.15 p.m.

These 40 acres represent something which we should cherish in perpetuity, for it lends itself to a beautiful botanical garden in South. Sen. Dr. Sampath could give you a great history of that estate, maybe better than I can.

Dr. Rambachan: Mr. President, I just wish to ask the Senator a question. Is he aware that the 40 acres referred to, Palmiste Pasture, is in fact, mortgaged to the National Insurance Property Development Company by the developers?

Sen. Haji Khan: Mr. President, I am not in a position to answer that question. There are so many things done by the Government and so many of its auxiliary agencies of which most of the citizens are unaware. If that is so, however, and attention is being given, well then time alone will tell what progress will be made so that we can follow and see what action is taken.

Dr. Rambachan: Mr. President, on a point of information. Having discovered it was mortgaged, I have approached the National Property Development Company and they have given permission to allow the development of the 40 acres, into a botanical garden. Even at this stage, I am in conversation with the Ministry of Environment and National Service to have a national service programme put into place in order to develop the pasture.

Sen. Haji Khan: Mr. President, that is news to me and probably that is one of the basic, fundamental reasons this Government is losing favour with the public. The public is unaware of the developments of the Government. *[Interruption]* Time will tell, dear Senator, I am not a prophet; I do not want to usurp the function, I do not believe in hypocrisy. Probably if this was revealed to the public, they would have appreciated it and I would not have come here and wasted valuable time of the Senators. It is not one of my characteristics to create mischief.

Sen. Furness-Smith: I am very grateful for the Senator giving way. The National Insurance Property Development Company was mentioned by the hon. Minister, as having lent money for this purpose. I wonder whether he is aware that the money in question is Government's money, as the Senator seems to be under the impression, or the money of the people through the National Insurance Board of which the National Insurance Property Development Company purports to be a subsidiary.

Sen. Haji Khan: Mr. President, you, yourself would recognize that question puts me in a very awkward position. I am not on the Government side and I am not privy to such information. Unfortunately, I cannot answer that question and perhaps with your permission, he could direct the question to the hon. Senator who gave an explanation when I think he might have been asking a question instead; obviously he would like to answer the question.

Mr. President: If the Minister desires to give way.

Sen. Haji Khan: He cannot answer that one, you see, Mr. President, thank you very much.

As I was saying, however, again it comes back to the question of all the taxpayers' moneys that are owed all over in so many different areas and there are so many encumbrances which I hinted about in my last contribution. Where do we find money to do all these things? In my preamble, I asked: How can we possibly

pass effective legislation when we have depleted resources of one kind or the other? I shall move on from that point.

Many of our Senatorial colleagues would possibly find it very strange to hear me bring up certain things here and places of interest of which they have never heard that are very famous places in the South-land. As you know, quite a number of them live in isolation and some live a convenient life. They know what they want, they indulge in what they want and they live the kind of life that they want.

I shall move on to number two. There used to be a very famous tomb in San Fernando which is know as the *Sagrado* Tomb. The *Sagrado* Tomb was at one time a very famous landmark of the city of San Fernando. That landmark used to attract visitors from all over the island, both from near and afar. That was because of its uniqueness. It was the only one of its kind in the country, because of its particular origin. Built by the Spaniards before the turn of the century, it was abandoned and thoroughly neglected with the result that it has since been washed away into the sea. But since the up-to-date history of this legend is readily available to us, can we not erect even a tombstone with a plaque as we do not have the money? Just a tombstone with a plaque to recreate this historical landmark—a landmark of significance. We are saying that we do not have the financial resources but we can do something without resources of that kind. If we can harness the human resources then we can do quite a lot in this country. But the human resources are what cannot be harnessed under the present regime, for one reason or another.

2.25 p.m.

Dr. Rambachan: Mr. President, the hon. Senator speaks about the mobilization and harnessing of human resources. Is he aware of the tremendous harnessing of human resources under the National Self-Help Programme of Trinidad and Tobago. This Programme has been established in 1987 by the Government of Trinidad and Tobago, of Prime Minister A. N. R. Robinson.

Sen. Haji Khan: Mr. President, I realize in the interest of time, I might not be able to make my contribution in the manner in which I am prepared to. So, with your permission, please, if I may by-pass that question, I would appreciate it very much. With that in mind, I shall move on to the next item.

There is something which is known in history as the Big Blood Fight of Marabella. I wonder how many people in this Chamber would have heard or know

about that. We have historians here, some would know but the majority would not know. It was at the Point-a-Pierre Bridge in Marabella, for the benefit of those who do not know. It was on this site that a duel between the slaves and their masters took place; it was at the Guaracara River that the slaves used to come up in order to get their vital supplies and I am not referring to "Crix", by the way.

What have we done with places like these? I am not talking about erecting large monuments that take up acres of land and take up all the finances that we do not have. Therefore, this site, in my view, should be recognized and become a permanent part of the struggle of emancipation. We hear so much talk about emancipation which is something that we hear and read about worldwide; we study about it and it is of great universal importance to mankind. Why can we not give things like these one single thought to be able to recreate situations like these so that people would recognize that these are the struggles that we went through to reach where we are today?

I shall move on to number four. I want to make reference to what is commonly known as Strikers Village in Point Fortin. It is my understanding—I am subject to correction—that the name of Strikers Village is due for change by the current Government. [*Interruption*] That will be answered at a later stage.

Sen. Bradshaw: Mr. President, I would like to inform the Senator that the place that was once known as Strikers Village, was never officially known by that name and is now officially known as New Settlement.

Sen. Haji Khan: Mr. President, that is the reason I am bringing up this point. You will get my answer to that. This area today is populated predominantly by thousands of oil workers who have had their origin at the time of the Butler strike in 1946. When they returned from Port of Spain to Point Fortin, they settled in this particular area, resulting in what has now become a very large housing development.

It is being rumoured that a name-change is being contemplated for this village. I am repeating this because you have heard it for yourself. But since this represents the struggle of labour, which is an integral part of the history of this country, and the struggles of the people, there should be no attempt in my view, to seek to change the name of that village because of its historical significance. Rather, we should seek to preserve, and if we are, according to the terms of reference of the bill which is before us for debate, are we seeking to preserve our national heritage or are we sitting here and planning to destroy our national heritage? That is what

we are debating here. You have heard the answer, is that a rational answer? Is that logical? Is that reasonable? Is that sensible? *[Interruption]* "You take it easy, you cannot make Geera." Empty vessels will always make noise.

So, I shall get back to the duty which I am here to perform. Why should we think of situations like these. Are we thinking realistically when we are presenting a bill like this? I am in support of the bill. I do not want it to be misconstrued that I am against this bill. I am in total support of the bill but I am drawing the attention of the authorities to certain situations that ought to be addressed and looked into as we go along: either building, recreating or destroying the national heritage of this country. That is what I am trying to do.

You have heard me say before in this House, that I live and work in San Fernando. I have made reference to San Fernando before and I shall do so once more. For in my considered view, there is a perpetually growing need for a museum in the city of San Fernando. Who will deny that? There is none to deny that. If I can talk in biblical terms: Who is one to deny that? There is none.

To go further, we had a building in San Fernando which was known as the Norwegian Building, built by the Norwegians who used to visit this country very often in that part of the land and they constructed their own building with furniture of their own designs, kind and type. They loved these shores and they handed over this building with all its contents to the city fathers of San Fernando. But, instead of converting this historic building into a museum, the authorities just transformed it into what is known today as a civic centre. Sometimes, we must ask the questions when situations like these arise: Where are we heading in this country? Are we going forward or are we regressing? Or, are we coming into this Parliament and just talking for the sake of talking to take up time because it is an exercise that must be performed?

The result is that the history of this fine building has been completely destroyed. Its history has been destroyed. But there is one unanswered question of great significance that I am prompted to ask. When that building was handed over to the city fathers, all the antique furniture which were very invaluable, were also donated to the authorities and up to this day, no one has given account or I presume, can give account of where those furniture have disappeared to. They have all disappeared into thin air. That is why sometimes we have to think of giving people a certain degree of authority and we are talking about trust. Although it is a different kind of trust we are talking about, we are talking about

the national trust but where is the trust and confidence to administer the trust that we are talking about, which to me is of paramount importance?

2.35 p.m.

Mr. President, I shall move on to another point.

Dr. Rambachan: Are you referring to the Paradise Civic Centre?

Sen. Haji Khan: Yes Sir.

Dr. Rambachan: Does the honourable Senator have in his possession a inventory of what was handed over before he makes the accusation or the statement which he has made? Has he got an inventory to say that X, Y, and Z were handed over?

Sen. Haji Khan: Time will not permit me to go into the inventory but what I am telling you today and what I am saying is concrete. I have the evidence to say what I am saying. If time permits I will produce this. I am saying this so that you can look into the matter. That is why I am bringing this to the attention of the House. I am mentioning this so that the matter can be looked into.

Mr. President: Let us have some order please! The Member is entitled to say what he wants to say at this stage. If anybody disagrees he will have the opportunity to get up and refute what he has said.

Sen. Haji Khan: I am not imputing dishonesty on the part of anyone here. I am not inferring that anyone here is dishonest. Whether they are or not, I am not saying that.

I am drawing to the attention of the powers that be that there is something wrong and being in authority, the matter should be addressed. For convenience, people always interpret things as they want. As I said in my last contribution, whatever is said on this side is always misconstrued as being, you are on the opposition side, so whatever is said, is said for the purpose of opposing. I am not here for that. I believe in realism.

Sen. Rampersad: Having listened to the statement—and I am grateful to the hon. Senator—are you accusing the public servants of not acting in the proper interest of the residents of Trinidad and Tobago, San Fernando in particular?

Sen. Haji Khan: I believe I have already clarified that point, so I shall move on beyond that.

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Sen. Haji Khan: I believe I have already clarified that point, so I shall move on beyond that.

I was talking about Farallon Island. How many here will know about Farallon Island? This is a small island on the sea coast of San Fernando in the Gulf of Paria, just way off the wharves in San Fernando. There is a beautiful house there which was left generations ago. As a college boy, there were private entrepreneurs who used to take people for boat rides there and make it a thriving business. Today, it has been allowed to disintegrate and we talk about tourism; the Tourism Minister is here, that is why I am talking about these things. You do not get hot when people are telling you the facts that will help. I am telling you things that you could address and make the country better.

I am talking about over 40 years ago. There were outings, excursions and even weddings took place in that building. It was a very famous resort. It was a money-making enterprise. It was a money spinner, a very thriving business. We talk about making money and generating income and we are throwing away money and seeing no money coming in. It is a one-way street. Whilst we are talking about promoting tourism, why can we not give priority to projects like this one which would necessitate only a bare minimum of capital, which would generate income and continue to generate income, whilst at the same time providing the potential for earning, not only local but also foreign income? It is a place of great interest and great historical significance. That is for who knows.

Do you want to waste some of my time?

Sen. Rampersad: Yes please. Thank you very much for giving way. I just want to find out what kind of advice along these lines you gave the former Minister of Tourism.

Sen. Haji Khan: Mr. President, with due respect to you, I have heard you say before, do not go into this House and that House and this Minister and that Minister's business. I do not know if they are trying to set me up here. I will not delve into that area. Deliberately, I shall avoid that kind of scenario. I will not get rough with them. I shall continue with my contribution.

I shall move on now to another area that needs looking into. We always hear about "Moruga fete". People know about Moruga. It is known by another technical name that many here may not know. You hear about the Columbus South Coast Visit, the historical name. [Interruption] I do not want to go into all of that. My time will run out just now. We are dealing with very important issues. I would say that because of its historical significance, for 25 years now the people of Moruga have preserved this event with great pomp as we all know, with great

pageantry and drama. Not only should this event be restored, but in addition, an appropriate permanent fixture should be erected in commemoration of this most significant landmark in the history of Trinidad and Tobago.

This is my recommendation to you. I am not quarrelling with you. I am giving you some ideas you could build upon. I am not against you. I shall move on because time is running out and I see what is happening.

I shall move on now to another area which I believe would be of tremendous interest, not only to the people of this country, but in future it could develop into something of international interest. I will classify that as a Transportation Museum, and I shall explain what I mean by that terminology. Now that the Public Transport Service Corporation has built a new terminal building at King's Wharf in San Fernando, the old Trinidad Government Railway Building should be made into a Transportation Museum. The building is already there; it is the property of the public of Trinidad and Tobago; it is a solid building which was constructed by people who knew what they were doing and can last for many more years to come. If this is done, it is my considered view, that we can bring back the legend of what was known as the Ciperio Tramway.

Dr. Rambachan: That is a good point.

Sen. Haji Khan: All the points are good but you see what you like. You only like to hear what you want.

Setting up this Transportation Museum, by utilizing a building which already exists, not where we have to expend a voluminous sum of money which we do not have, to create a structure of that type, but it is already there. It depends on the foresight or the lack of foresight. When you are talking something with sense and people do not listen, how will they know the ideas you are giving them? You see, "when a man knows everything" he does not take any ideas. You are throwing water on a duck's back.

I was talking about a Transportation Museum and it is my considered view that the recreation of such a system would undoubtedly be a tremendous money spinner, since most of today's generations would, out of sheer curiosity, flock to see the system because of its novelty, as well as to share in the past history of the country.

2.45 p.m.

The generations of today do not know what a tramcar looks like, Mr. President, and you will agree with me. Do you not think that this can be a safe, money spinner? But what are we talking about, investing money with no returns? We must think in terms of doing that at times, investing where we can generate some income while we expend money so that we can increase our type of investments in other diverse areas.

Mr. President, I would like to refer to San Fernando Hill briefly. As we all recognize, there has been a tremendous transformation of the San Fernando Hill within recent years. *[Interruption]* I am giving them the kudos, despite the fact that it was done by private enterprise and authorities, but I agree. You see, I am not here to quarrel. But the point, Mr. President, really that I want to emphasize here to the administration is that we should spare no effort in capitalizing on the wide variety of the indigenous orchids found on the San Fernando Hill. These were found by Professor Kenny during his several jaunts during 1988 and 1989. Many of us here will not know that. These are species that have been existing there for very many, many years and they are being left and they will go to ruination again while we are talking here about protecting and preserving our national history and national heritage.

Do we have to spend any large sums of money to protect the plants that are already there and that grow naturally? This is what I am talking about. I am not here to antagonize anybody. I try not to do that because that is not my kind of personality. But these are important questions. These rare species have been in existence for years and years, despite the persistent destruction of the hill and its environs over several decades. The questions are: Who would take up the gauntlet? Whom should we approach? Who would take up the responsibility? We have several authorities: the San Fernando City Council is one, and then, by extension, we have several other authorities, Mr. President, but who would take up the gauntlet? That is the question.

Mr. President: I am afraid the speaking time of the hon. Senator has expired.

Motion made, That the hon. Senator's speaking time be extended by 15 minutes. *[Sen. A. Lequay]*

Question put and agreed to.

Sen. Haji Khan: Mr. President, I shall now move on to what might be a more complex area but a much more important area which undoubtedly would add to the historical significance of the whole nation, and that is a permanent exhibition site at Union Park. In my view, Union Park Estate should be acquired by Government and made into a permanent exhibition site. This site can be subdivided into four quadrants, representing the following areas of activity:

1. Historical: This aspect should cater for a museum which would reflect our economic history: for example, our operations in the production of sugar, oil, asphalt, cement and other basic products.
2. Economic: This would be an area used expressly for the purpose of displaying our locally available and marketable manufactured goods and services, marketable both locally and in foreign markets.
3. Human: An area exemplifying our great national heroes and, for example, Adrian Cola Reinzi and Tubal Uriah "Buzz" Butler, and many others, so that our upcoming generations would be able to follow the historical achievements and successes of these giants of the past and be inspired to move forward and to achieve greater successes in their own lives and, by extension, those achievements can redound to the credit and the benefit of the entire society in general. So this is an area where we can serve to inspire our youths further, despite the attempts that are being made.
4. Production: In this area, Mr. President, I suggest that we set up cottage industries. I know the Government has embarked upon that area already. I have given credit to this Government for the things that it is doing when it deserves credit, and I will continue to do so. In my view, cottage industries can be set up here and other local handicrafts could be displayed here; other indigenous type of crafts of various kinds. So at one locality we can have on exhibition an array of products of every type and kind manufactured and offerable by this community, both to the local and the foreign public and markets, and this can serve not only as a great show-piece, but it can, in my view, attract a great degree of foreign exchange, which is an area that we must always be concerned about, particularly in these times of our dependent economy.

I am going over now to what is known to a few of us here as the "Merikin Village" in Moruga. People hear about Fifth Company, Sixth Company, one company, this company; they do not know what it is all about. They do not know

if it is a corporate body or if it is a company running illegally or what, but they hear all these things. So I will try to, in a few words, Mr. President, give them an idea of what it is about in addition to making my recommendation. In so doing, I suggest that efforts should be made to develop the "Merikin Village" in Moruga which is the origin of the Baptist movement established by the American soldiers who stayed behind after the war in 1777, establishing the companies, numbers one to six with the exception of company number two. So this is an important and integral part of our history, and it is an area that we can look into and something be done and something be set up so that we can recreate our history and our national heritage in this area as well.

In conclusion, Mr. President, let me state that my support for this bill, obviously with certain amendments, can be well guaranteed.

Another matter that must be very seriously addressed, however, is the composition of the authority of this National Trust. I daresay that the selection of its members should be made up from the broadest spectrum of people as possible, and moreso, those who are equipped with the special technical know-how and those who possess the special interests and have the communal interests in order to make such an entity a successful one. It should not be left to become the preserve of a bunch of party faithfuls. Thank you very much.

Sen. Dr. Martin Sampath: Mr. President, I had not intended to speak this afternoon, and I shall be very, very brief. It is because I did not want to interrupt certain of the Senators during their speeches that I am rising now so that I could make a few points very briefly.

First of all, I want to point out that a great deal of time was spent in this hon. House speaking about the environment and its possible effect on our national heritage and on the buildings, and so on, Mr. President. I humbly suggest that a great many hours were wasted in talking about the environment, not because there is no effect of the environment on our buildings, I know that there is. But a lot has been said about the environment in this very Chamber not so long ago. Perhaps it is because certain of the Senators sitting on the Opposition Benches were not here at the time when, in fact, I myself and many others discussed the effect of the environment when the Marine Affairs Bill was brought to the House, and so I think they could be excused. But I have been told that *Hansard* is available for these things for reference and, in my humble submission, they could have referred to *Hansard* instead of replicating and duplicating a lot of the debate that went on. It was quite unnecessary.

Sen. Spence: While what the hon. Senator may be saying is true, I think Senators will recall that on that occasion the Minister of Culture, Sport and Youth Affairs stated that the environmental bill had come to both Houses of Parliament. It seems to me that if we are in the position where a Government Minister, a Member of Cabinet, does not know that a bill as important as that on the environment has not come to both Houses of Parliament, it behoves us on every occasion to emphasize as much as we can matters to do with the environment. So I think that the hon. Senator is misplaced in suggesting that we should not have dealt with the environment.

On Saturday last I went to a discussion on the environment and I could not help remembering that intervention on the part of the hon. Minister which certainly horrified me.

Dr. Sampath: Mr. President, I thank the hon. Senator for his very kind remarks, and the only point I am making here is that much more time could have been spent in a debate on the bill and not so much on the environment. But I thank Sen. Spence for his remarks.

3.00 p.m.

However, these hon. Senators in the Opposition were here at the time when I referred to the effect of the motor-car industry on the environment. In fact, I referred to the motor-car industry and its effect on the environment as they are producing corridors of death. I remember making that statement very clearly. Yet, although they were here, they felt it necessary again to refer to the sulphur-oxides and nitrogen-oxides and so on. Again, repetition.

Of course, Sen. Deosaran who is not here today, also referred at length to the environment, but I must say he did it much more elegantly than the Members of the Opposition.

I thank Sen. Haji Ralph Khan for his very kind reference to myself and my interest in forestry and so on. There were many interruptions when he was speaking. Like him, I too, am a San Fernandian. In fact, I was born in San Fernando, and I spent many hours, when I was working at the hospital in San Fernando, trying to locate the spot where I was born in the San Fernando Hospital. My navel string is buried in the San Fernando Hospital grounds and, like him, I have a great deal of feeling for San Fernando.

He is quite right when he refers to landmarks in San Fernando that have now been lost. The way he spoke about the San Fernando Tomb, a wrong impression could have been given. It did not go over the cliff during the regime of the present Government, it went over the cliff since I was a very young man. I remember, with almost tears in my eyes, seeing this noble monument going over the cliff by the process of erosion. Incidentally, the *Sagrado* Tomb has got its name—

Sen. Haji Khan: Mr. President, this is a matter of clarification. Never in my contribution have I implied that the erosion or the tomb being washed into the sea was due to the fault of this Government. I just said it was allowed to happen. Thank you, Sir.

Dr. Sampath: The Senator is quite right, of course. He never said so and I have not said that he said so either. What I have said is that the way it was said, people, in general, could get the impression that it was the fault of this Government. I want to make it perfectly clear, that this was done a long time ago. In fact, it may not be widely known that it got the name "*Sagrado*" because of the leading inscription on one of the tombstones, which I remember very clearly. It started off, "*Sagrado a la Memoria de...*", sacred to the memory of, and the names of the family who were buried there. There were six coffins, which I remember very well. When I was a boy, the bones were actually visible in those coffins; they were lead coffins—I think the Senator may remember them. In fact, I myself am guilty of vandalizing one of the tombs. For some time I walked around with one of the bones from the tombs which I now know to be a humerus, and that is not funny.

Sen. Haji Khan: Do not boast about that.

Dr. Sampath: The colonial government should have been very much more particular about safeguarding these landmarks. As a matter of fact, this is one of the important reasons this Government is making haste to have this bill passed, because of the desecration and the loss of all these things in colonial times and also in the neo-colonial times under the past regime. We are trying our best to rush this so that we can safeguard all these monuments.

Mr. President, there are many things that we have done. The San Fernando Hill was referred to. I think Sen. Khan has told us how nice the hill looks, and I invite everyone present here to visit that hill. That is something which our Government has got going and which is a happy restoration and a happy landmark.

As a matter of fact, I remember clearly in the early 1950s when at one of the Naparima College Old Boys' functions, our guest speaker was no less a person than Eric Williams. I had the honour of moving a vote of thanks for him, and I made reference to the rape of the hill which was proceeding posthaste, with gay abandon at that time. The hill was being cut down and thousands of tonnes of the material were being removed from the hill. At that function, I had the opportunity of pointing this out and hoping that this landmark would have been preserved. This Government has in fact put an end to that and is restoring the hill.

He has mentioned Broadway. I wonder how many people know why it is a Broadway. It is the tramline that Sen. Khan has referred to. The tramline used to run in the centre and there were two roads on either side. As a matter of fact, as a boy I remember very well seeing some of the old rails sticking up there. I never saw the tramway myself but I saw some of the rails from the tramway still present. The colonial government filled up a lovely cutting where I used to walk from Naparima College to the library, down in the flat; from Broadway right down to High Street. This cannot be done anymore because, in their wisdom, the colonial government filled that in to build the new hospital. To my mind, that should have been left as a landmark, and maybe a tunnel made for passing through.

Flatrock is another site which has been taken over by the Naparima Alumni to keep as a spot there. At present, the Reform factory is being used by the Government, and there are plans to make that into a sugar museum. The Senator did refer to that.

I have a photograph of the old Les Efforts Pond, a photograph which shows San Fernando Hill, and there is a lodge in the background to pinpoint it. That is something which has not been preserved; it has gone. Dr. Robert Guinness who was a friend of mine had a house somewhere there, and he said to me, "Martin, why do you not drop in after the meeting and have a drink with me?" I said, "Where do you live?" He said, "I live at the lowest point of the Les Efforts Pond." He did not need to say anything else. I knew exactly where it was. That place was filled up and made into a housing development. I am sure if the present Government was in power at that time it would have prevented that, and preserved this pond as a landmark.

We, the present Government, have done many things. We have not forgotten that landmarks are to be preserved. For example, the Non Pariel Estate. You have heard of this estate. There was an old plantation house in this estate and Dr. Allen

Sammy, as Chairman of the Board in charge, made sure that he and his team restored this great house, and it is there now for tourists. So, you see, this Government has not been sleeping. The hon. Minister present here has mentioned what we are trying to do about the Palmiste Estate.

I thank the Senator for bringing these things to the attention of the Senate, and I am sure that the Minister will pay attention to this. The actual board that is formed to look after the putting into operation of this National Trust will benefit a great deal from what Sen. Khan has told us, and I hope when the time comes he will put his proposals to them.

In closing, there is one question I should like to ask the Senator and I shall give way to him. He spoke about the establishment of the companies in the Princes Town/Moruga area. I was under the impression that these were not Americans; that these were British soldiers, freed slaves, who were loyal to the British in the American War of Independence and so they were given lands around there. I feel that to call it an American site may be a misnomer, but I am prepared to give way if he wishes to correct me on that score.

Sen. Haji Khan: Mr. President, there is a slim possibility that there might be a historical slip-up there. I cannot say, but I will determine the facts and pass on the appropriate information to the Senator.

Dr. Sampath: Thank you, Mr. President. It is important that in preserving our heritage we should not only take the physical and also the legal steps in passing a bill of this sort, but we should be very careful in our analysis of the historical antecedents of those places.

In supporting the bill, therefore, Mr. President, I utter the hope that it will be supported unanimously. It is a good bill. With that, I leave it to the Senate to support the bill, and hope that we have no one at all voting against it.

Thank you very much.

3.10 p.m.

Sen. Motilal Moonan: Mr. President, I stand this afternoon to support this bill. But before I start, I must mention certain points. I read the bill and understood—if I misunderstood I would like to get an explanation—that the buildings around the Savannah would be given priority or refurbished by someone or some group or that the Government would give money to the people to

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-11th August 2005 at 11.00 am

-23rd August 2005 at 9.00 am

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Express, (1995, October 30) p. 10. Abuse of PM power. Khan R.

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Express, (1995, November 7).It's a person's right to choose. Khan R.

Express, (1995 November 28) p.9 A good move to fix police headquarters. Khan R.

Express, (1995 May 28) p.12. No voluntary resignation. Khan R.

Express, (1996, July 16) p. 9 JP Body tells AG act on corruption

Express, (1997, April 13) p. 10 Justice, dignity and decorum. Tang Lee J.

Express, (1998, November 11) p.12 JP Khan quits under 'pressure.'

Mirror, (1995, May 28) p. 24 Did Gift resign or was he fired? Khan R.

Mirror, (1995, June 4) p. 24 Insulting, distasteful comments by the CJ. Khan R.

Newsday, (1995, May 17) p. 9 Maraj's ideals will set him free. Khan R.

Newsday, (1995, November 13) p. 9 A tribute to Mr. Panday. Khan R

Newsday, (1995, November 13) p. 9 It's a person's right to choose. Khan R.

Newsday, (1995, December 25) p. 9 Hats off to Ganga Singh. Khan R

Newsday, (1996, July 17) p. 16 Some JP's illiterate says PRO of JP Association

Newsday, (1997, April 4) p. 6 JP's and AG disagree over payment of services.
Charran R.

Newsday, (1997, July 19) p. 15 JP's eagerly await word from AG. Charan R.

Newsday, (1997, July 29) p. 19 JP's pledge support to Community Police. Charan R.

Newsday, (1997, August 6) p. 21. Statutory Declaration forms needed. Khan R

Newsday, (1997, August 14) p. 5 Justices of the Peace: Reports misleading- no forms
at police stations. Mahabir, M.

Newsday, (2002, July 22) p. 13 The punitive bail system. Khan R

Newsday, (2002, July 27) p. 12 ASJA board should be removed. Khan R

Newsday, (2005, May 10) p. 13 Khan back as head of JOPATT

The Independent, (1997, July 21) p. 4. Crackdown on corrupt cops, JPs.

Trinidad Guardian. (1994, Oct. 24) p.12 Whatever happened to the Sagrado Tomb.
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Khan R.

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consecutive years. Alleyne J.

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De Verteuil, Anthony C.S. Sp. (2000). Great Estates of Trinidad. Trinidad: The Litho Press, P.O.S.

Ifill, Garnet. (1987). San Fernando 1956 - 1986: A Pictorial Review. Trinidad: Working Press Inc. Rahaman's Printery Limited, La Romain Trinidad.

ERRATA

- P. xii - 2nd to last line “tawhad” should read “tawhid”
- P. 14 - 4th line from bottom “heal so” should read “he also”
- P. 23 - para 3 line 3, delete repeated line “which assisted his cause as an insurance salesman”
- P. 124 - last line “Ramad?n” should read “Ramadan”
- P. 132 - pages 135-136 are a continuation of the National Trust Bill (just before Land Acquisition Act)

Testimonials

Haji Ralph Khan has displayed the remarkable ability to put his religious knowledge to public service. From all that he has done for his community, it is clear that his passion for helping his fellow men is a significant part of his mission in life. The contents of this book reflect that dedication, passion and life long mission.

Sen. The Hon. Ramesh Deosaran

Professor

Centre for Criminology and Criminal Justice, UWI, St. Augustine

I first met Haji Ralph Khan some time in 1980 when we got together with several other brothers to propagate Islam. Later on, I got to know him still better, when we journeyed to Saudi Arabia in the same group to perform the Hajj (Holy Pilgrimage) in 1988. Our acquaintance and close friendship blossomed then and has continued to this day.

During my tenure as Chairman of the Haji Ruknudeen Institute of Islamic Studies from 1999 to 2003, Ralph served as a Director and Secretary to the Board and made a tremendous contribution towards the propagation and teaching of Islam in Trinidad & Tobago.

Ralph is what you may call “a man of all seasons”. He has had a very diverse and colourful life from being a Teacher, Assistant Accountant, Insurance Executive, Restaurateur and eventually having his own travel and insurance company. He has devoted a great deal of his time to community service, especially in Islamic work and continues to serve as a counselor and a Justice of the Peace. He has been in politics and served as a Senator in 1990/91.

He is a Singer of repute and it may not be well known that in his younger days he placed second in the finals of the Tenor Solo Class at the Trinidad Music Festival.

Ralph is fearless and he is not afraid to give his opinions/views openly. He has voiced his candid views in several fora and has written several interesting articles in the local newspapers on wide ranging topics.

His varied life and his experiences are well documented in this biography and I recommend this book as good reading of the life of a devoted son of the South and a devoted son of the Republic of Trinidad & Tobago.

Dr. Aleem A. Mohammed

CMT (Gold), BSc. (Hons.), MB.BS. UWI (Hons.), LLD UWI

About the Author:



Shameen Ali is a Secondary School Teacher having taught for the past twenty (20) years. She received the B.A. (Hons.) from the University of the West Indies, St. Augustine, Trinidad, as well as the M.Phil, Ph.D and Diploma in Educational Administration from the same university. In 2004 she authored her first book entitled 'Daughters in the Diaspora'. She is the Acting Head of the Language/Creative Arts Department at Siparia Senior Comprehensive School and enjoys painting, drawing, writing poetry, gardening and doing social work.

Testimonials

Haji Ralph D. Khan has continued to serve the community - the Muslim community and the national community - with dedication and distinction over the years. Whether as a member of the executive of the San Fernando Jamaat or as a Senator, whether as a member of the executive of the Anjuman Sunnatul-Jamaat Association Inc. of Trinidad and Tobago or as Justice of the Peace or in his other portfolios over the years, Haji Ralph Khan has proven himself to be upright, straightforward, hardworking and efficient. In addition, his melodious renditions of Qaseedahs has always been an adornment to many an Islamic function. And it has really been an honour for me to have been closely associated with him for the last fifteen years. May Allah Almighty, the One True God, continue to bless and guide him.

Siddiq Ahmad Nasir. B.A., LLB, M.Ed.

Haji Ralph D. Khan has given a lifetime of devoted service to Trinidad and Tobago in the areas of religion, culture and business. As a gifted and versatile Singer, Ralph has performed with distinction at Trinidad Music festivals. Also, his rendering of Qaseedahs (Islamic Songs) is exceptional and his response to community needs has always been compassionate. Haji Ralph Khan is a visionary and an exemplar of good thoughts and noble deeds.

*Hans Hanomansingh
Communications Specialist*